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The Shadow Christ

The Shadow Christ

AN INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST HIMSELF

BY

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Contents

		PAGE
I	The Pagan Emphasis	1
II	The Emphasis of Life	8
III	The Emphasis of the Ideal .	12
IV	The Hagar Nation	19
V	Thou Shalt Not	22
VI	Thou Shalt Not	28
VII	Thou Shalt Not	32
VIII	Thus Saith the Lord	36
IX	Milk and Honey	45
X	I Am that I Am	53
XI	Thy Gentleness Has Made Me Great	63
XII	Deep Calleth Unto Deep . .	72
XIII	Who Giveth Songs in the Night	77
XIV	When the People Saw the Mountain Smoking They Stood Afar Off	83

CONTENTS

XV	"Where Wast Thou When I Laid the Foundations of the Earth?"	89
XVI	Curse God and Die	97
XVII	Doth Not Wisdom Cry and Understanding Put Forth Her Voice?	106
XVIII	Vanity! Vanity! All Is Vanity	114
XIX	The Shadow Christ	118
XX	The Shadow Christ	123
XXI	The Shadow Christ	128
XXII	The Shadow Christ	134
XXIII	The Shadow Christ	146

A book is the shouting of a man's heart from the housetops.

The public is a cruel confidant. Either it hurts him who dares by not hearing what is most precious to him, for the rumbling of the drays — which is oblivion; or it hurts him when the drivers of the drays shout back — which is fame — the world's rushing compliment of misunderstanding a man instead of forgetting him.

Yet who would not dare?

No man shall lose his soul in risking it with its Larger Self.

Out into the listening darkness, where the shadow audience waits — baffling in its very welcome — this little book goes forth. By far-off lamps it seeks you, by windows never seen; past a mist of faces that answer not — and as, one by one, for their little life with the earth-light and your soul, you open these leaves of mine, each brings its greeting from a world I love — its hope and

fear of you — before you fold it back into the darkened place, where it shall wait and watch for the coming of men.

A clumsy thing — a little pasteboard and gilding and type — a book — with the hum of the paper-mill lingering in it and the touch of unknowing hands. With the colors of desire and the symbols of experience — to give one's soul to paper — to have it flashed forth in bare black and white, and thrown, like the news of the night, in the dooryards of the world. Paper is but paper to the world, and a book — a book.

But the Great Spirit — who to and fro between our solitudes goes guarding the children of thought — shall read with you these broken memories of days He has walked with me; and Life — the gentle old interpreter — shall bring the meanings home, at last.

In the brotherhood of play and worship and the humor and awe of truth shall we be wayfarers together. This is not an argument, but the breath of a land that is loved, not gaining its way by a logical use

of terms — nay, losing it, perhaps, in low music without words — a spirit — a passing light — like a halo on the hills — with no authority but its shining — perhaps — with no importance but its being loved, with no ambition except to be forgotten when Truth is more beautiful than now. Too reverent of the Unknown God and too proud of the spirit of man to settle anything — a book with but one hope which can come to pass — that in being read it may read you; and with one truth that can always stand — that of being true to itself.

The Shadow Christ

"A man shall be as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

The Shadow Christ

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I

The Pagan Emphasis

LOOKING at the world with the cosmic vision that has come to us, there is a tendency to limit the moral genius of the Hebrew to a somewhat smaller place than it really occupies in the supreme civilization of the earth. The faint gleams of our own truth on the eastern horizon of thought have come to us, and it is not unnatural to mistake the afterglows of the waning visions of India for a beautiful gray pagan dawn that will soon suffuse the world and enlighten the Christ. When a strange religion floats to us across the seas, like the chant of countless peoples from the mysterious land of legend, with

all the charm and theological romance that dream by the sunrise, the tendency on the part of the rarest men — the world-listeners — is to listen to other revelations overmuch, to come to conclusions that should only be reached by the study of the civilizations they have produced.

The man with an international, intereon insight — who has the temperament of a Japanese mirror, who sees through to China when he looks at the reflection of American life, or Buddha when he studies the Beatitudes; whose spiritual life, blending Christ and Confucius, the Koran and the Sermon on the Mount, is a world-anthology, with touches of truth from the Veda and the Old Testament, from Rousseau, Thomas à Kempis, Walt Whitman, Plato, Athanasius and Mrs. Besant — is prone to be grotesque with what would otherwise be a very beautiful conception. Being a whole world by himself, a sum-total *sui generis*, he does not quite know how to master it, and fails signally in the very sense of proportion which he has col-

lected himself from everywhere to illustrate — to a provincial Christendom. His balance fails generally in the direction of his favorite ignorance. It would not be called ignorance. It would be called new knowledge; but, from the Tree in the Garden until now, new knowledge has been but the showy side of what men did not know.

It is well to listen to Omar Khayyam singing like an Æolian harp in the desert, with the winds that blow down from the stars, but the Astronomer Poet was not Persia. The Christian religion is not its deeds. The pagan religion is not its songs. Our souls are filled with the dreamy voice of Mozoomdar, and thoughts, like incense, swing to and fro out of the reverie-land of the East; but Mozoomdar is not India. As long as we judge pagan religions by their ideals and Christianity by its performances, the place we give to the legacy of the Hebrew race will be far beneath its importance.

The emphasis of the half-unveiled — the beautiful endeavor of the spirit to atone, to

eke out its ignorance with kindness — ever overreaches itself. The fairer comparison of civilizations and revelations is not gained by looking down from the words of Christ to their fruits in the government of the western world, but by looking up from the fruits of the East to the fruits of the West, and from the words of Confucius to the words of Christ. Until that far-off day when words and deeds are synonyms this is the first principle of comparison. Each must be compared with its own kind.

The only way for the western idealist to vitally appreciate the Hebrew who made him possible is to be transmigrated from the Browning Club into a sleepy little heathen Hindoo, toddling around a bungalow, wondering what everything is about, until, brought up to dream in the India schools, through the religion and the life of his people he moves out at last to the thought of the world and discovers Christianity.

In comparing the Hebrew and other contributions to humanity, a man born in

a Christian country is at a singular philosophical disadvantage. He has to think his way backward to the pagan religions,—almost as confusing and untrue as rendering "Parsifal" backward, note by note, or culminating the great drama of Bayreuth with the dark wonder of the Kundry motif, instead of the Saviour strains of the Grail, and the echoing Glaubenstema. Mozoomdar follows the logical order of revelation. As his heart widens out he thinks his way —not backward, but forward, over dead nations and sleeping gods, to the climax of human faith. His spiritual experience is arranged by sheer circumstance, according to the dramatic unities. In expressing philosophically the Christian point of view he has but to think his life. Canon Farrar, in trying to realize the pagan point of view, would have to *un*think his life—if a word may be coined, the very awkwardness of which reveals its meaning. Our knowledge constitutes our ignorance of the ethnic religions. The perspectives are disturbed and the shadows are in the

wrong places, but a pagan approaches Christianity the way the world did. Every man born into the natural heathenism of being a boy follows spiritually the logical order of revelation in his own life; but Chunder Sen, when his soul peers over the utmost of his native worship and gazes for the first time upon the vision of Judea, follows the old heartache of the world, and onward — like a miniature human race moving through his soul — through the faiths of centuries and beautiful dead ideals he passes to his God. It is a cosmic experience. The heartbeat of all the nations shall be in the love of such a man for One who, like Day and Night, shines and shadows over all lands and peoples until they know Him.

His Christianity alone can have the world-depth, to whom has come the wandering through the world to reach it. He thinks centuries, and wonders religions that we can only guess. We can never conceive the climax of the Hebrew revelation. We have not experienced it as a climax. We can

state it — we can write down symbols, guessed from our unthinking — but we cannot unwind the years that are gone, and we can hear but faintly in the far-off place of books the footsteps of our fathers coming to our faith. With the wistfulness of the Messiah has come to our Christianity the emphasis from above, and that which appeals to the converted Hindoo as a climax is to us an uncompleted prophecy still seeking for its higher self, in the day when our revelation shall be our civilization, and not the token of it, and belief shall be life. But with his actual biography of conviction the converted Hindoo enters into a religion which is a cosmic symphony, filled with the struggles and dreams of belief, retrospective, dark, and splendid with memory, and glad with the Final Word — he comes with the ethnic emphasis — the emphasis from below.

II

The Emphasis of Life

By taking the centuries one by one into its confidence a great book lives. One year at a time it earns its greatness. It is immortal, because it never lets a moment go. The world shall be filled with no passion or question or despair it will not share. It knocks at every door. It beats down every barrier. With the flush of its mighty youth it gathers its thousand years. It throws itself upon life, the substance of which immortality is made.

A Bible lives because it strives — adapting, resisting, impelling. It lives by being lived. Renewed with each new childhood of the earth, forever in the heyday of its strength — men call it old because it has been young so long.

The assertion that he who knows the Scriptures will possess all knowledge, made with the deftly concealed autobiographical feeling of the man who is obliged to make it, is founded upon an underestimate of a book the very first principle of which is that it is so intimate with life that it cannot be interpreted by itself and requires all knowledge to show how true it is. It finds its authority in seeking out the answer of the human race. From the beginning to the end it seems to search — "Is not this true?" A divinely unfinished book, faith does not consist in repeating it. Faith is our life with it. It does not live for us. It does not see for us or see to stop our seeing. It was not inspired to stop inspiration. It will receive before it gives.

The disciples did not follow the Master because they believed in Him. They believed in Him because He made them believe in their own lives. The faith of the Son of God was His faith in the sons of men. Crying His faith upon the very cross, it is His divinity that he brought out the

divinity of those who crucified Him, that he had the divine daring to give them divine work to do and divine things to see, and showed them that they could see and do them. It is His divinity that He strives with men, not through a book, but through a life that completes the book — through that greater soul, wrapped like a larger self around every man, which is the diviner half of the Bible; which, whether it be called the Christian Consciousness, or the world, or life, is at once the approach and the issue of the truth — the eternal, tireless, patient emphasis of God.

But while the pervading human life is the pathway the Father of the prophets has placed before His book, no one who has not a private door shall enter there. The youth who reads looks forward to his own soul, and to him who sees his life behind him, the story of Israel is the clumsy, halting, mimic Bible he has been himself. Egypt is his metaphor. The wilderness his figure of speech. The Leviticus period that comes to all development, the Elijah

attitude, the David time of war and song, the period of Proverbs, of captivity — he has lived but these. The Isaiah spirit seeking him at last and opening the vision of faith, the Bible is God's account of him. Strange, and sad, and beautiful, and helpless, and perverse, he comes to his New Testament as the Hebrews came to theirs. He but reads the Bible with his own.

The omnipresence of the Great Book is but the omnipresence of life. It makes every century the comrade of ours, and every man its parable. The contemporaneous is history flattened out. All time covers every moment like the sea. The world is the huge mimicry of a single man. The great abstractions that govern nations are but the inventories of old histories. Theology is biography. Men are the creed of God.

An empty Bible, in an empty universe, in an empty life,— to him who dares to read a Bible by itself.

III

The Emphasis of the Ideal

BUT between the Hebrew unfolding his thousand-year vision and the insight of our modern life has arisen, under the guise of freedom of thought, a slavery to the matter-of-fact, a scientific petulance which has strangely disturbed the real spiritual values of the Old Testament.

Forgetting in the first importance of a fact (its being true) its second importance (its being kept where it belongs), the huge Moment in which we live is prone to bewilder the truth with statistics—to forget the epic outlines, the sweep, the mighty movement of that vast conception, when, thousands of years ago, down the footpath of the Hebrew soul there came a God to struggle with the nations of the earth.

He may not have come. He may not have thought of coming. Though it be from the beginning to the end, the romance of a national imagination, the sacred ghost-story of the world, it has become the most literal, the most material reality in the history of men. With every fact and every theory brought forth against it, stripped to the nakedness of a dream, the very dreaming of it is the most consummate achievement, the most dynamic event in human destiny.

If the sea is a lie, to have thought of such a sea involves the greatness of the sea itself. If Isaiah was impracticable — if, as a matter of fact, Jehovah did not attempt to put so much in one man, — it is enough to know, so far as essential truth is concerned, that He could if He would. In the mean time, combining gifts that only the divine heats of a hero's heart or the movement of great events could have blended together, Isaiah stands as an abstract of what a great man will be like when he comes — a shadowing forth of the ideal toward which we strive.

The actual is not the truth. It is the part of the truth that has been attained. The ideal is the truth — the whole truth. The criticism that makes a prophet impossible only makes the dream of such a prophet more wonderful — a prophecy in itself. Facts did not create an ideal. Facts cannot destroy it. Facts destroy but facts. If a man is apparently destroyed by being proved a dream, the dream will make a score of men to take his place. It will call to them, struggle with them, lift them to itself.

Nothing is more real than the ideal. Mountains are made of vapor, and the soil of the ground is as the dust of clouds beside it. Brick and mortar are built upon it. Bronze and steel and gold and silver — the hands of men and the fingers of machines — wait upon it. The sheer material forces swung into its mighty service — the levers with which it lifts this little earth, dictating events, dominating nations, guiding philosophies, placing a strip of sky over every life, whirling the globe to every

morning with a hope — the world itself is the massive measure of the spirit, the shadow God casts across time and space in stone and iron and fleeting things, of the dreams of men.

The peculiar coördination of powers gathered into an ideal, a hero, and called his personality, we may dissolve. We may dissolve him into the forces of his time. We may dissolve him into his ancestors. But he is there. As a logical ideal he passes into life. His spirit possesses the world. In analyzing the inspirations of the Pentateuch, in showing the several men that Moses may have been, Moses is not removed. We are but given the genealogy of his greatness. If he might have been, he was; and whether he is a prophet or the prophecy of a prophet, he is a personal actuality in human life, and one with which to live. Proving that he is a group of men cannot destroy him, any more than the slip of a scholar's pen could have created him. If it cannot be said of a man named Moses that he incarnated all of such a spirit once, it can be said that the

spirit has become his incarnation,— that the incarnation of the Spirit which Christ reserved as the supreme and mightiest form of His Messiahship, has come through the lives of men to this soul of Sinai, that it has made him one of the dominant personalities in the building of a world. He cannot be ignored as a fact—one kind of fact —and he defies the necessity, the moral helplessness, of being dependent upon another. He is a father of facts, though he be a myth. The margin of the Bible does not hold the fate of its great beliefs in its calculations, and the soul of Moses does not rest upon the skill of experts.

Shakspere would be none the less a personality whether he ever existed or not. If three poets had written the plays we call by his name, they would still represent a colossal individuality—a three-poet-power spirit. Whether He who governs the disposition of forces blended the three actually into one manifold life Himself, or left it to the world and the action of events to do it—makes an interesting and important,

but not fundamental, fact with regard to the content of his genius. The genius is here. It is a truth. How he came to be here is a question of fact.

The great spiritual unities, when once they have come forth and faced the earth, when they have been wrought into its experiences, when they have become the builders of its facts—have become material in the most material sense; it is only the passing phase, the morbid literalness of our scientific spirit, which could have made the nobler unities so dependent on the smaller ones as to imperil faith.

In tracing the evolution of the Christ idea, there would be a superficial and plausible convenience in arranging chronology so that Job would come between David and Isaiah; but, according to the content of his message and the unities of the truth, Job furnishes the link between David and Isaiah, though he prepared his message, perhaps, in an aloof life, and may have been singing in one wilderness while Moses was ruling in another.

Indomitably relevant, a great man places himself, like a great truth, where the tyranny of circumstance, the commands of time and place, are beneath his feet. He partakes of the ways of God. In the distinction between the truth, which is the spirit, and the fact, which is the incident of the spirit, lies the only defense of the great Scriptural ideals. Ideals can only be defended by ideals. The facts, though they have incalculable modifying value, did not create the truth. They can neither save nor destroy it.

IV

The Hagar Nation

UPON our unshamed Gentile lips there shall be no unhallowed criticism of the saddened prophet-people that walk alone before the nations of the earth, with the fire of the old expectancy still beautiful in their eyes.

Guilty, for hundreds of years, of a persecution which is the vastest cowardice of history; as disgraced men, who have revenged with eighteen vindictive centuries the pitiful blunder of a day,—only in the utmost humbleness, with the tenderness of the One we cherish, shall the Gentiles say, "*Thou* didst crucify Him," or dare accuse the mightier nation for that one vast, swift moment, which shall be forever its awful title to more love and more forgiveness

than all the nations of the earth—because they took the cross that we would have had ready, and did our crucifying for us. The silence of Christ shall descend upon our brother's head to-day from those who, in the century when He came, would have led Him as a lamb to the slaughter in one year instead of three—who were not beautiful enough among the nations to have His mother born amongst us, or great enough to gather the traditions or sing the dreams that should feed the childhood of a god.

A nation, the inspiration of whose very sins has furnished the imperative religion, and compelled the mightiest literature of the world,—a nation which has given the most sublime and consummate expression of repentance in all the unfolding of the human heart,—never to be forgiven itself,—at whose feet the peoples of the earth have learned to sing and learned to pray,—without whom never would the knowledge have come to us to condemn them, or the spirit with which to judge them, or the Christ with which to be superior to them,

— that the Pharisee might be rehearsed again.

Suffering under the supreme misfortune of being chosen of God, of being the most divinely exposed race, working out in its glowing public soul the salvation of us all, dedicating its very sins to humanity (sins sublimely remembered only because they were immortally confessed) — the Jewish nation has been condemned by those whose sins are not even remembered — ignobly forgotten; and in a world which the Jew has made possible, we look about us but to find that he is held responsible for his crimes, as if they were peculiar to himself, while his genius for God has been appropriated as the universal discovery of men, by peoples who would not have known that the crimes were crimes, had not the Jews in psalms and prophecies taught the stammering nations what sin was, until, sinning one more sin, in the shadow of the Cross, they fled from before the faces of men, with a confession which is the gospel of the earth.

V

Thou Shalt Not

ALL of the Ten Commandments but one tell people, not what they must do, but what they must not do. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" does not begin with a "Thou shalt not"; but it ends with one, and the only positive command that the Jews possessed in their great sacred classic was the fifth: "Honor thy father and thy mother." This is the one which they have notably kept,—the one without a "Thou shalt not" in it.

The Ten Commandments are the epitome of Jewish history. With the negatives left out, they are all prophecies. "Thou shalt steal," "Thou shalt commit adultery," "Thou shalt kill." In telling the Jews what not to be, Moses gave the most mas-

terful synopsis of what they were — of what we would have been — that the world has ever seen. One of the great series of triumphant, godlike paradoxes which ended at last in a cross — it shall be remembered as part of the triumphant knowledge and the most strenuous hope of men, that the redeeming nation of the earth, laboring under its nine "Thou shalt nots," was a nation whose hymn-book was written by an adulterer, whose system of ethics was founded by a murderer, improved and given its most perfect expression by one of whom the world cannot forget that he had great riches, in his sayings about poverty; or that he had one mistress to every four proverbs, in his sayings about life. A nation so covetous for its own brothers that we have sat at their feet and borrowed from their brains — to be covetous against our brothers. A nation so idolatrous that the conduct of its worship could but be assigned to the descendants of the priests of the Golden Calf; and yet a nation of whom it must always be said that

there has never been a time in history when a Jew would not rather have given up all that he had and all that he was rather than give up being the son of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and beginning his prayers with the beautiful title for God that was woven of his fathers' names.

He has kept the commandment without a "Thou shalt not" in it. He has always kept it. There is nothing he will not do to keep it — except keeping the other commandments; an exception that he shares with a world which has learned almost everything from the poor Jew's sins except not sinning them — a world which did not even have the "Thou shalt nots" to sin against.

Ever since the Bible commenced with pointing out the fruit that could not be eaten, prohibition has been the one invitation that the human heart was sure to accept, and the profound failure of the Ten Commandments in the Jewish nation was the nine negatives. The first form of the Hebrew conception of duty — that is, the

typical human conception of duty — was NO. There are promises, but the promises are given to those who will not turn to idols, and those who will not marry the Philistines. The Beatitudes of the Old Testament are "Blessed are the ones who will *not.*"

There has never been a people in the wide world who started their national life with so definite an idea of what they were not to do. The Old Testament is as largely a book of prohibitions as the New Testament is of invitations. The prophet preaches "If you do not," and the prevailing tone of the gospel is "If you do"; and with prophets anointed to go from place to place making inspired objections, Jehovah was known by what he would not allow, his servants by what they avoided, and even the positive blessings are the rewards of negations; the evolution of a series of righteous acts thus inevitably becoming in Jewish history the evolution of a series of last resorts. Duty is the Alternative.

And yet the negative tone of the Ten

Commandments was supremely logical. The field of vision was the wrong. There were nine things the children of Israel were doing that they ought not to do. There was one that they had better continue to do. The Commandments addressed themselves to the point.

A negative is but the rudimentary form of a positive, and there is a latent affirmative throughout all the Mosaic tendency. But the Ten Commandments were not negative merely because of the low plane of spiritual life among the people. Moses had commenced his career by saying that he could not be a prophet, and the negative was the instinctive and necessary approach of his spirit to the truth. Fifteen hundred years of Hebrew history are stamped with the individuality of one in whom the love of God was wrought out as an imperious obligation to do other than he would. The austerity of the Decalogue was Moses' sternness toward the tenderness in himself. For not out of a mighty aloofness from sin, but out of a mightier intimacy with its aw-

ful will, had this leader of Israel struggled to the top of Sinai and under the eaves of the heavens written the desires of his heart. Lying at the feet of the Most High, striking with a burning pen across every desire the terrible, beautiful "Thou Shalt Not," he was prophet of the struggle, prophet of the struggle with himself, writing commandments out of his conquered sins,—weary commandments,—too spent with victory to sing, too dread of defeat to sing—the infinite No, and silence. And thus as the first and necessary stage of the divine affirmative, No shall stand—the eternal symbol of the sublime, unwilling inspiration of the human heart.

Only the No had been lived, and only the No could be prophesied.

VI

Thou Shalt Not

II

THE men that Christ addressed needed prohibitions quite as much as the freed slaves at the foot of Sinai. It was the achievement of the spiritual experience called the Old Testament that the Beatitudes did not read as Moses would have made them: "Unblessed are they that mourn not, for they shall not be comforted." "Unblessed are they which hunger and thirst not after righteousness, for they shall not be filled." "Cursed are the unmerciful, for they shall obtain no mercy." When Peter was taking his denials back, and the nails were being driven through his hands, there were no mighty "Thou shalt nots" echoing over the pain he had longed for; nor was there a voice calling to his cross,

"Unblessed are ye when men shall not revile you and persecute you for my sake."

"Simon, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?"

In the darkness and the swoon:

"THOU KNOWEST THAT I LOVE THEE."

The boast of a dead face.

But Peter would not have died for the Decalogue—for nine things he could not do and one that he must. Jesus did not say, "If you do not come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will not give you rest." The soul had lived beyond the No, and thus while the Man of Galilee was wont to tell a man to love his wife, Moses had been wont to put the case, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." And in Exodus, "Love thy neighbor as thyself" is "Thou shalt not kill," a statement not only failing to be the best means of teaching the son of Abraham to love his neighbor as himself, but not even the best means of keeping his neighbor alive.

Without doubt it was one of Bathsheba's charms that she was Uriah's wife; but

David killed Uriah because Bathsheba was beautiful and the Decalogue was not. If, like the soul of Christ, the sixth commandment could have seemed to love David back, if it could have been positive, if it had been something that could have set his pulses beating and drawn him to itself, it would have saved the murder of Uriah; but the sixth commandment was a Not-something. David had to break it to learn what it was. Like death, it had a hollow voice, and to sin or to die is to pass into the land where it speaks, and learn the concealed affirmative.

The sturdy saints of the Old Testament learned the Commandments by breaking them. Through positive experience God wrought his Great Negations into history, and made the way across crime and penitential psalms to The Great Assertions.

The Old Testament would be the most discouraging book in the world to read without knowing that a new one followed it. The Bible is the evolution of an emphasis; its beauty through all the Mosaic

influence being the strenuous and terrible beauty, the sublime consciousness, of the Infinite No, until at last it breaks forth in the most beautiful words that were ever sung—the Infinite Yes—the prophecy of Jesus the Christ. Peter and Paul and John saw afterward. They reaffirmed the affirmed. But Isaiah, singing out of his broken life and his broken nation to the people of the Thou Shalt Not, is the most heroic spirit in the annals of men, because he sounded the victorious affirmative that has become forever the courage and the destiny of human life.

VII

Thou Shalt Not

III

It is a fundamental criticism upon the Ten Commandments that they could not be chanted; that the Israelites sang about Jehovah and what he had done, but they did not sing about what he had told them to do—and that is why they never did it. It is the eternal symbol of ethics,—the conception of duty that cannot sing must weep until it learns to sing. This is Jewish history.

Nothing could be more characteristic of the Hebrew than the way he left Egypt. He did not know where he was going; he knew from what he must get away, and from the beginning he comes to his morality somewhat as he came to the Red Sea, expecting not only a force to drive him

into righteousness, but a miracle to help him through with it. The Ten Commandments could not be more exuberant than the inspired experience of the great Sinai leader, and could not but breathe forth in their very form the sublime unwillingness and the bare victory with which they were wrought out.

The fact that Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land is one of the revelations of the Old Testament. He was not a Canaan prophet. He was an out-of-Egypt prophet; and it will always be the indictment of Israel that they were willing to live so many years in the Promised Land upon the inspirations of one who was not allowed to enter it—a primary prophet, inspired with a timely ignorance and a timely truth, whose message it was to tell all men that they must not be what they were, but whose greater message will ever be that prophets must not be what Moses was. And while it is but the charity of the historic sense to place every great soul in the frame of his time, and love him for the

long heroic generations that he must have lived beyond his brothers; and while no vaster soul shall ever be held accountable for the degraded ways in which little men have used his inspirations to stop the world; it is but a tribute to him who first took the shoes from off his feet and walked on holy ground before the presence of the Lord, to hold his great name strictly within that beautiful fitness in which God gave it to the world. To the children of the Christ shall Sinai rest forever under the shadow of Nebo, nor may we ever forget that, by the decree of God, the prophet of the wilderness belongs to the Wilderness himself.

Hero of the Eternal No — we can almost see him now, standing on the Moab hills, with the pathos of the shut-out years pressed down upon his mighty spirit, trying to look with shaded eyes through the great cloud doors of heaven upon the land that was the promise of the people that he loved. Brave First Listener — with the old Jehovah voices sounding dim and far, with the ache of those unconquered cities in his heart,

turning back to Nebo to lie down with God. The silence folds him — with no children near; the winds, the low-voiced winds, beautiful wanderers from the haunts of men, come gently where he is, and with unseen hands touch the softened commandment face; and the Sunset comes and looks, and the Night, and there is One to watch.

So comes to pass the wonderful never-coming-back that men call death — the lonely death that, like his lonely life, God kept for a beautiful secret to himself.

VIII

Thus Saith the Lord

FIFTEEN hundred years more beautiful than Moses, John of the Jordan wilderness comes to us, the last refinement and the highest development of the Mosaic tendency. Standing in the great assertive moment of history with the most specific and immediate Positive that ever fell from the lips of man, there seems to have gathered in him the residuum of that inspired negative which from the beginning had dominated the Hebrew life.

With all the dreaming and the living that had come between; with the mighty modulations that had been wrought in the voice of Sinai by the great Invitation Singers, and those full-hearted ones whom God had anointed to *expect*, it would be an exag-

geration to say that John, the herald of Jesus, was a kind of contemporary Moses, facing God in Galilee as the leader of Sinai had faced him in the burning bush. But it would not be an idle exaggeration, and has within its doubtful boundaries a certain capacity to work out a thought for us. Perhaps it is more the picturesqueness of John's position in history than John himself, but whether he is really more illustrative or not, he certainly is more availably illustrative of the Old-Testament "Thus saith the Lord" than the Old Testament itself. Standing in high relief against the divine life, he dramatizes the commanding ethical conception of fifteen centuries. It is placed in him once and forever, bold and strong beside the conception of eternity. With all that exuberant atmosphere of promise that a herald must always have, John surely had about him a haunting spirit from far back in the years, a glorified "THOU SHALT NOT," which made him as negative as a herald could be, and be a herald.

As a method either in ethics or religion,

the lineal descendant of NO is MUST. The spirit which in the rudimentary stages of prophecy had caused the law to be stated in negations is the same spirit which in the rudimentary stages of the Christian truth causes the gospel to be stated in obligations. Obligation was John's way of stating it.

The contrasts that have been contrived between the law on the one side and the gospel on the other have long since receded from our thought, and except as conveniences for the stronger statement of lower and developing phases of the great paradox, they stand as added symbols of that trait of finiteness, that whimsical dogmatism, that must ever be detected, as the years go on, in the deciduous theology of men.

That God is Love, and that Law is the way he loves us, and that God is Law, and that Love is the way he rules us, must be an assured principle in any Messianic presentation of the truth. Until we can separate God from God or make him superior to himself, there is but one God and he is the God of the Law, and Jesus is its mighty

Adjective. The question before all the following saviors of the world is not one of law or one of gospel, but a question as to the most inspired statement of the gospel law. This is the question that John asked Jesus—"Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?"

It was before he had heard of Christ's evangelistic methods that John had called him "One the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." Looking almost out of his grave to watch himself being forgotten, the John in the prisoner's cell was too essentially a preacher not to question the Son of God because he was different from himself. When his disciples returned to him with "Do you not remember, John, those old sermons of yours, the city trooping out to meet you — strong men crying out with a sense of their disobedience—the long lines of weeping penitents that you baptized in the river?"—when, as the shadows grew long in the cell, they told him the words of Christ, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I

will give you rest," there came into the broken old prophet's heart the thought of that greatest sermon of his life and the mighty climax of it, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? His fan is in his hand. He will gather his wheat into his garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." And the more he heard about Jesus, his inscrutable "Abide in me," his eating with publicans, his divine, disreputable love for every one,— the more he wondered how this disastrous tenderness could belong to one in whose face he had seen, one wonderful day, the shining of God.

If Jesus had approached the woman at the well with the air of being better than she was, she would either have doubted it or hated him for it. It was because he offered her the most perfect fellowship at first, and afterward told her all that she ever did, that he was the Son of God.

It is because John would have commenced with the seven husbands and would have conditioned his fellowship, that on hearing the rumors of Jesus he sent word

to him "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" It was the residuum of the negative. It was the law trying to state the gospel and the obligation stating the invitation — a way of reaching men which Christ himself was never eloquent enough to attempt — to whom it has ever belonged to reveal, from the very first, a fellowship divinely unconditioned except by blindness in men themselves — the distinctive prerogative of whose mighty heart has ever been the beautiful recklessness with which he opened it and kept it forever open.

The law with an open heart is the gospel. *The law with the heart open first.*

God may be as frank as he will. It is the littleness of love that has taught us conditions and economies. The conditions of fellowship make themselves. The irreverent seeing of too much love, like the seeing of too many stars, is guarded forever by blindness. A great heart keeps its secrets like the sky, by being open.

Though a merely apparent refusal and

but Moses' way of stating his fear to look, the Lord's refusal to let Moses see his face is one of the root-principles of the Decalogue. John was the spiritual descendant of a prophet who would have been ruined at Sinai if he had let the children of Israel become too familiar with him. It was appropriate that he should go out into the wilderness of Jordan to keep his influence. His doctrine depended upon the wilderness, and John was too thorough a theologian to be an immediate convert to one who both by temperament and destiny kept out of it, and mingled with men.

The most characteristic sentence that Jesus ever uttered was "Follow me," and it is because the spirit of the Old Testament says "Go," and the spirit of the New says "Come," that we know that God has been upon the earth.

The emphasis of the Old Testament is in the second person. Its whole attitude is "Thou," and the New Testament which came with Christ is a revealed WE from beginning to end — the mutual book in

which the Law lived with the disciples, the terrible "Thus saith the Lord" kneeling down before a few unknowing fishermen to wash their feet. The real distinction between Jesus and his disciples was his incredible approachableness — that he could get nearer to men than men could. The Son of God because he would almost rather have been called the son of man, he abolished forever the Divinity of Distance and made fellowship the supreme attribute of God. With heroic simplicity he risked his mission on the earth, and founded his title to be the ruler of men upon letting them be familiar with him. This is the most sublime and daring adventure in the history of truth. The gospel consisted in knowing him. Redemption consisted in living with him. Salvation, impossible as an act, became inevitable as an acquaintance, and the whole New Testament wins our hearts because our hearts are woven into it. Peter's epistles being published with his denials and Paul's sermons with Christ's — it is a

shared book, in which God and men tell how they have loved and judged each other.

Entering into the You and I, beginning to see duty from above, instead of seeing it from below — surrounding it with God — this is knowing what duty is. The opportunity that He and we have together.

The difference between the "Thus saith the Lord" and the "Abide in me" no man has ever told. At once the sublimest and tenderest truth in all the wandering of the human heart — the answer of the wistfulness of thousands of sad dead years — there is nothing beautiful enough to say about it — except silence and living — and living — and living.

IX

Milk and Honey

On some accounts the best time to have been a preacher was just before Christ. Zechariah and Malachi had a great advantage in preaching Jehovah to their congregations. No one could ask for better material for powerful sermons than the minor prophets had — which explains their being minor prophets. Their sermons were all worked out for them. Preaching was sheer history. The bare facts of the Hebrew national life were brutally on the side of the preacher. A Hebrew audience could almost have been converted with a map; and spiritual insight, dramatic genius, or subtlety of philosophy, or ingenuity of statement would hardly seem to have been necessary to make a profound impression

upon the Jew. His doctrines had dates and places; his belief was what had happened to him; his convictions were events, and the events said just what the prophets wanted them to.

Wickedness was never remunerative in the Old Testament. The catastrophes that came upon the wicked were all accurately timed and overwhelmingly convincing. It was a book to delight a preacher's heart — the Arabian Nights of goodness. It had the appeal of appeals to the mass of men. Zechariah and Malachi were fortunate in being preachers just at the end of an Ancient Book, in which everything came out right, and just before the beginning of a New one, in which everything came out divinely and sublimely wrong.

Jehovah began with what his children could understand — with stories — with telling them what he would give them if they would obey him — a new playground called Canaan — milk and honey.

A Bible not full of inventories of property written with a naïve relish that

soothes the guilty human heart, would not be human enough to have come from God, or divine enough to have understood humanity; the only difference between the Jews and the Gentiles in the love of gold being that the former gained more to love. David sings, "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want," and the fear of God is the fear of poverty, and faith is the spiritual interpretation of gold. The Book of Job, sublime in being an exception, is founded on the wonder of a righteous man that the Lord could take away his riches when he had not sinned. Entering the presence of the Lord with his teasing, infidel swagger, Satan strikes the keynote of the Old Testament, "Doth Job serve God for naught?" — the first anticipation of Christ's criticism on the origin of the Jew being curiously made by Satan himself, some fifteen hundred years before. The Book of Job begins with an imposing processional of camels, and the woe of it begins with the fact that the camels are carried away. It rises by sheer force of

personality into the New-Testament song of suffering, of freedom, of noble defiance of reward and supreme consciousness of God; but all this glowing vision of the soul moves on to the climax, at last, of 1400 sheep and 6000 camels and 1000 yoke of oxen and 1000 she-asses,— the necessary moral to the Jewish mind. Sheep, religion, and camels. Righteousness, milk, and honey. And what the Jews would have done with the Book of Job if it had had a New-Testament ending they told the world with a cross.

Solomon will be wise, but wise enough to be rich. The story of the Queen of Sheba gazing on his glories until "she had no more spirit in her" is handed down from generation to generation of mothers, to teach children morality and the pomp of righteousness; and John himself, writing after Christ and trying to find a figure that would appeal to his people, brings a gold-loving Bible to a close with a shining Hebrew picture of a sapphire heaven, with pavements of the root of evil and pearl gates and jasper walls.

"Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you" was not the text that led the children of Israel out of Egypt. In the childhood of religion, their Bible is the child bible of the human heart. "He that is greatest among you let him be your servant" would not have been the watchword with which Abraham acquired his fortune; and when Joshua led the people over Jordan, if they could have seen the crosses with which the King of the Jews rewarded his disciples, they would have turned back to Egypt.

Christ's stories to his children ended in crosses; Moses' in flocks. That a Bible that had failed to get men to perform their duties by placing riches at the end of them should go bravely and divinely on to try to get them to perform their duties with crosses at the end of them might seem strange; but crosses were more practical, — and Jesus was the Son of God because he knew it.

Abraham is converted by an offer of sheep and a nation of grandchildren, and his Peradventure prayer is one of the great

bargaining classics of the world. When Jacob wrestles with the Angel of the Lord, and, getting what he wants, makes it the turning-point of his life and falls forthwith on Esau's neck, and is a good and prosperous saint ever afterwards, it would seem to make the best possible material for teaching ethics. When Joseph, who is the religious lad of the family, is put into a well, only to make the bad brothers bow the knee to him in Egypt; when he resists temptation in Potiphar's house and is forthwith offered the Prime Ministry — nothing could be better, one would think, for impressing the generations with a proper conception of duty than this.

Pharaoh tries to be boldly wicked, and the twelve plagues announce to all men that it does not pay; and when he breaks his word and pursues Israel, his army dwindles down to a few bubbles rising from the bottom of the sea.

Amos and Haggai had all these facts on their side, but they accomplished nothing with them. The Savior of Success failed. The

delicious boyish thrill of Haman's leading the beggar Mordecai in the king's clothes around the city, the exultant justice of Haman's hanging on the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, would make a climax in a sermon to men; but it failed. In the New Testament Mordecai would have been hung, and Jesus, committing the very important mistake of bearing his own cross, conquers the nations of the earth.

Esther weeping for joy because God rewards her with saving her people, in the New Testament is Mary weeping in the darkness under the cry of her child, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Daniel, made Lord High Chancellor for saying his prayers under Darius, under Christ is Peter; "Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death."

The fire comes down from heaven to the lonely righteousness of Elijah, and he kills four hundred of Baal's prophets; but we see Stephen with the dying glory in his face under the flying stones. No hand

stops them. There was another way. It was to let Paul catch the cross-vision in Stephen's look and bear away the inspiration that was to save the world. The mouths of Daniel's lions are opened in the Coliseum. The flames that would not burn Shadrach break out at the stakes of Christ's disciples, and Nero's torches of Christians flame the light of our sweet and suffering gospel upon the stately walls of Rome.

The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests,
But the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.

The "Thou shalt not" failed. The "Thou shalt" failed. The gospel of bribery failed. They were but the gropings of the human spirit; the wavering intimation of One who said, "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

X

I am that I am

NAAMAN was a foreigner. He did not see any connection between dipping in a particular river seven times and being cured of leprosy. He wondered why five times would not do as well. Cato would have thought the command trivial and unphilosophic. Victor Hugo would have said that Elijah was lacking in a sense of humor, and Benjamin Franklin would have gone down to the river and taken an analysis of the water. But it was different with a Hebrew. He preferred not to know why a thing happened. He could not see the connection between the blowing of trumpets and the falling of the walls of Jericho. So it impressed him.

He would have patronized a God he could understand. Gideon was not troubled because he could not see the logical relation between lapping water with the hands and bravery. Napoleon would have chosen his three hundred men by studying them closely, and Xenophon would have philosophized that the men who lapped with their hands showed more self-control than those who greedily knelt down to drink, and would therefore make the better soldiers. Gideon did as he was told. He probably would not have done it at all if he had been told why.

It was when the sun stood still that the sons of Abraham and Isaac were breathless in their piety and overwhelmed with a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah. Amiel stands under the sky and worships the Creator because the sun moves on, and if the sun were to stand still at ten to-morrow half the Christian world would begin to wonder if God existed, and the other half would for the first time be thoroughly convinced he did, and pray as they never

had prayed before. These are two influences toward deity.

The first Hebrew to be impressed with the orderliness of God was Job; but the more thoughtful the Jew became in his religion, the less hold the religion had upon the masses. And except with the progressive minority the proverb never had the force of the command. If the reasons for the Decalogue had been published as an appendix, or scattered suggestively through Leviticus and Deuteronomy, it would have honeycombed the Mosaic law with a pathetic and fatal logicalness. A god giving a reason would have been plaintive to a Hebrew. Even men did not have to give reasons — except to their superiors.

They could argue with the Voice, but they did not expect the Voice to argue with them. Aristotle would have died unknown in Canaan. A command was the only syllogism that a Hebrew understood. It was because Moses never argued, perhaps, that the Lord selected him. Aaron's argumentative gift furnished the reasons

for a Golden Calf. The reasoning people are largely on the wrong side in the earlier revelation. Pharaoh made out an excellent case against Moses. Moses had nothing to say except the ten plagues. Elijah was not a philosopher. He called down the fire from heaven; and there is no finer scene in Elijah's life than when he silently throws his mantle upon Elisha's shoulders without trying to convince him of anything. No one but Elijah could have done it, and he could not have done it except with an Elisha, who was entitled to be a prophet because with one glance into the splendid, silent face *he knew a man.*

Balaam was full of reasons. Jonah had it all thought out why he should not go to Nineveh; but when the Lord's spirit returned to him, and he was preaching in the streets of the city, he told them the facts. It was later, when at a safe and righteous distance he was serenely waiting for the city to be destroyed, that he commenced to argue again, and Jehovah left him. "Why did not the fire come down

from heaven?" And Jonah soon found himself in a naïve, prophetic distress that the Lord would not sweep away forty thousand families in earthquake and lightning, to finish his argument and prove that he was right.

It was an essentially matter-of-fact inspiration that held the balance of power in Hebrew history — one which (outside of the great prophets) explains every great popular faith and every great popular movement from the demand for a literal king to the cross of the figurative One. The national inspiration came from the blending of two facts. One was a command, and the other a miracle.

Right was right because God commanded it. He did not command it because it was right, and the Hebrew felt bound to a thousand duties because of the orthodox miracle he always required to help him do them. The obedience that came in the gospel because the reasons of heaven are shared with us, was demanded in Leviticus because the reasons were not shared; and

the miracle, which is a glorified lack of reason, was the far-off deprecating secret symbol with which the hiding human heart approached its open God. The great sharing ideal had not been reached. It was a slave's religion. The moral philosophy of the Hebrew was the Lord's convenience, and the lash of the Egyptian followed his worship for a thousand years.

In its first conception being a god is being subject to oneself, and, with all his theocratic traditions, the king was guiltily nearer to the Hebrew heart than the prophet, because a prophet was subject to a God and a king was a god — having at least the divinity of doing as he pleased, except when an unseen power interfered. Ahab was the logical outcome of the Decalogue. With the idea that righteousness consisted in not having one's will, the stronger a man was the more right he had to do wrong and the more inevitable it was that the king should be the most wicked man in Israel. Disobedience was but dealing with the Commandments in the same spirit with

which they had been written — a fulfilment of a choice — an ethical conception on which one does right for the same reason that he does wrong — because there is something stronger than he is — the very brutality of morals, the religious form of cowardice.

In all the most simple concerns of faith and conduct, unquestioning obedience is but a higher form of unquestioning disobedience, still maintaining the rudimentary and barbaric emphasis of force. Elijah's argument was not with the nature of his hearers nor with the nature of God, and the four hundred dead prophets with which he brought his mighty service to a close were but the inevitable outcome of the doctrine he had been preaching. The children of Israel went to and fro on the scene of slaughter, looking logically down into dead faces for the proofs of the righteousness of God. The bears that devoured the mockers of Elisha but put into bear language the essential elements of Elisha's ethics. The leprosy of Gehazi was the argument for the tenth com-

mandment. The sinfulness of adultery was proved by the throwing of stones, and the unrighteousness of murder was established beyond all dispute by another murder.

A law which found its first appeal in not giving any reasons could only be reasonably enforced by not giving any more reasons. The theory of ethics that was based on a will could only be carried out by force. It was the time of the unsharing One — the One who was God on Mount Sinai because he would not give an account of Himself, and God on the Cross because He would.

The life of the Messiah was not a denial of reason, but a definition of it, being from the first an exaltation both of its sincerities and possibilities, and always of its dignity. Intuitive rather than dialectic in his methods, it was the very nature of his commands that they were insights and demanded insights — the seeing of reasons — to keep them. "I am the light of the world." The unquestioning obedience that

Moses demanded became in the Christ the great sharing ideal of men — the obedience which questions, and then *commands itself.*

The word Why is one of the keynote words running through His influence on the earth — a word around which he gathered all the tragedy and love and sorrow and faith and hope that made him the Great Experience of the world. In all his exasperating interviews with ignorant men, used as it was from the beginning to the end for cunning and cruelty and scoffs and crosses, one of the great fundamental forms of growth which He informed forever with the inspiration of His life was the question mark. The divinest word in the human heart except Yes, and the only way to Yes,— this Why that followed Jesus— a word the limitations of which can only be known by using it, and the inspiration of which is living in the Mind of God. Perfect obedience can only be the sharing of a command, and through the freedom of many a brave and struggling question

entering at last into that divine life which belongs to us and to which we belong — the divinity of which is that it commands its own obedience and obeys its own commands.

"They shall say unto me, 'What is His name?'" "And God said unto Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM.'" A non-committal divinity allowed but a non-committal Decalogue. It was but the time of intimation. Jesus was the frankness of God.

XI

Thy Gentleness Has Made Me Great

A PROPHET is one who infers. He abides in the divine symbols that concentrate life. He is spiritual, because instead of needing a thousand facts for one faith, he gathers from every fact faiths that are thousandfold. The unknown wraps its spirit about every knowledge, and every experience is the symbol of what he knows without experience. The souls of events commune with him before they are born upon the earth. In the passion of his thought walk the centuries which hour by hour and day by day his brothers shall live bitterly through to know. His spirit comes, a figure of speech. To understand him is to be a nation in one's heart. He is the metaphor of a thousand years.

The world's dullness is its literalness. We know the earth by surveys and the sky we have learned with figures, but the prophecies that God would sing to us—one by one we grimly pace them off. They are trodden in sorrow into the creeds of men. Our religion has been seeing afterward. The only prophet we fear is History—the Brute of Truth—too actual to argue with, too safe in the past to crucify.

Moses was solitary because he looked forward and David a minstrel of the people because he sang five hundred years of facts. In the naked might of personality, out of oblivion itself a prophecy can come forth, but hundreds of years must visit the heart for a psalm. It took a great many graves for David to sing, and the wine of countless lives, crushed in sorrow and sparkling with gladness, drop by drop, to make songs like these.

The people had lived. So they could sing. Decalogues may be drawn down from a cloud and delivered on stones in a day, but songs are not made while a bush is

burning, or conceived of smoke and thunder while the people wait. With great slow chords they come — tremulous out of the past — with shadow choruses they come, with dead hands to touch the strings and old souls for melodies. To prophesy is to anticipate a new experience; to sing is to bring back the soul of old ones. God has two prophets for every truth: Moses gives the law; David sings its life.

The inspirations that have been founded in the beginning upon a solitary soul obeying a mountain must be founded now upon the experience of a nation with itself. It was a literal nation. It could not take its songs in advance. Its overtures are all solos. Note by note, life by life, Song is taught them. David's is an after-song. So it is a chorus. He sings facts.

But the experience of the nation is the accompaniment, the innumerable undertone, to which David sings, rather than the song itself. It affords him the choral effects, those mighty antiphonals between the soul of a poet and the voices of his age

and people, which alone can make the song of his life an immortal necessity with men — a multitudinous truth. But as with all great singers, the greatest fact, the greatest experience to David, is himself.

To be a great man is to be greater than a people, and to be a great singer is more than to sum up a nation in a rhapsody or write down its heart in a hymnal. It is to sing more than the nation sings.

Truth calls to every poet: "Thou shalt come with me. Through shadow and sun I will lead thee; with dreams I write upon thy face, and into thy heart I pour forever the Melody that dwells with me. It shall be thou." With the tyranny of truth the poet goes forth, and Life, Life, like the hand of God, sweeps across the spirit that he calls his own, and strokes from out the strings the strange, unwilling songs that sleep within. Melody will not let him go. "Yea, though thou art broken, O poet, and in the silence and the dark thou wouldst lie, thou shalt sing! The day shall smite thy chords. In the night shall beautiful truth break in

upon thy rest." Leading by being led, ordained from the beginning of the world to be greater than himself, with irrevocable beauty each new-born song locks the poet's old self away. If he be a singer, song shall sing him into a great poet. If he be a great poet, song shall sing him into a prophet — or silence shall be his — or the muffled way where great songs cease, and the great but broken voices are led to the forgetting-place of men.

It came to David to be greater than himself. And to him who is greater than himself is God God. Not on Mount Sinai, nor in the biography of Moses, nor in a book, nor in a temple, but in himself, David worshiped. So he was a singer. So he was a prophet; and the greatest event that had taken place in Hebrew history was the heart of a shepherd lad — a heart which was a continual discovery to itself, from the psalms the sheep knew in the night dews to those the people chanted when the king was dead, and the singer was borne to silence. Through a supreme

achievement with himself — a penitent, beautiful self-respect — a self-assertion as sweet as the trust of a child, there came to pass in David the first great revolution in the Old Testament. The God who is a Speaker in the Pentateuch is the Listener in the Psalms. The law of the gospel — "The Lord said unto Moses." The gospel of the law — the first of the Bethlehem shepherds singing on the hills a thousand years away with the daring of love. "Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh upon me. Make no tarrying, O my God."

It would seem as if being a Moses were one of the helpless instincts of life — the "Thus saith the Lord." But David's asking the Creator to listen to his thoughts is the mightiest acquirement of the Hebrew spirit, and forever marks with the soul of the psalmist the most difficult crisis in the approach to God.

The prophecy of Isaiah was supremely logical, and had that inspiration of inevita-

bleness which the Great Spirit is wont to give to utterance. The coming of Jesus was the unfolding of the only possible plan. His dying on the cross was the very axiom of his being among men at all. His resurrection was as unavoidable as his life, and for a Church not to have followed His message is as unthinkable as the discouragement of God.

But all these have been the unfoldings, the refinements, the inevitable beliefs that came from this first victorious belief of David's, when, thousands of years ago, with no great ages to tell him the way, with the God of Sinai he walked the hills at night and dared to tell Him all his heart.

With an artlessness that makes him man's immortal child, with the Awful One of the clouded mountain — the Thunder One of Moses — wandering with his hand in His hand, prattling of his tiny life to the Creator of the ends of the earth — to David, little one of God, great among men, was the mightiest, loneliest deadlift of faith, in the conquering of the heavens for the earth.

Belonging to a people who had assumed that what made authority authority at all was its being outside of themselves; taught to look out, David dared to look in, and He who had appealed to men because He was a Pillar of Fire, appealed to David because he was in himself.

The crisis which comes to every religion and to all art came in Hebrew history with this first great poet. The eternal issue faced the shepherd boy — the one that has faced every singer and every prophet since. It came to him either to found his faith upon his experience or upon his inexperience. Either to base his inspiration upon not being inspired himself, and fight for the experience of Moses with an inspiration of not believing in his own, or to trust himself as a man's only reverent way of trusting God, and to serve Moses by being a prophet too.

David looked in. He lived within. He sang his life. Not a minor poet or a sub-Mosaic prophet, but, like Isaiah and Job and Jesus, giving to the world, he gave himself.

One of the great self-assertions of history, the first radiant, humble GOD AND I—the egoism of a shepherd boy becomes the ritual of the human heart and the dignity of a listening God is conferred upon the children of men.

XII

Deep Calleth Unto Deep

WHILE it is the power of the egoist that he reveals his life, he reveals no more than his life. David was not Solomon or Isaiah or Job, and he shared God's will more than his mind. The old boy-prayers — the out-door ones — with the night wind in them, and the sleep of lambs, and the awe of the sky, and the nestling communion of a child, he never outgrew. Even through the sturdier ones, to be sung with the clash of shields and the voices of armies, there is something that steals from these — David is always a shepherd boy when he prays. With the child-beauty he stamps forever the relation of man to God. He stands forth in the wise, unhappy world with a

philosophic innocence that has never belonged to so great a man before or since.

But he *lived*—this shepherd boy; a beautiful, revealing, singing thing—to live. He could not but spiritualize the law. Spiritualizing is experiencing, and thus came to pass that supreme crisis of the truth—the letter blossoming into the spirit—the law, objective in Moses, subjective in David—the mightier form of inspiration, the noble necessity of song, the heart of a shepherd, the expression of a world.

And indeed, whatever the self may be, self-revelation from the One in the heavens to the singers on the earth and the men who live the songs, is the creative principle of history. Genius is the conviction of ingenuousness. Prophecy the conviction that heaven listens and the earth waits—the helpless destiny of utterance. The world is not divided into singers and listeners. Because he could not keep still about himself, David became the opportunity of God. His prayers are not cata-

logues of desire, and there is more information than petition in this communion of the shepherd with The Shepherd.

In the jealous, watchful silence with which men often walk the revelations of the world and hide their hearts to listen, past a thousand beautiful doors are they doomed to go that would be opened if they opened theirs. Though the souls that go to and fro before Him can never hide a thought, He listens, not because He needs to listen, but because it is divine to hear His children speak; and when David tells his Maker the quaint human thoughts that fill our little living here, the prayer is not for the prayer. It is not for God, but for the beautiful returns he sends to open places. When the heart has been emptied He comes. Only the singer listens. The self-expression of man is the self-revelation of God. The Incarnation — older than Jesus — is a habit from the beginning of the world. He has come to His sons not by hiding the human, but by calling the human forth and shining through it.

It is night. Following silence and shadow and sleep into the camp, David listens to the breathing of Saul — the breath of hate when it wakes, of murder and pursuit, a shout across the battle — as innocent now as the lambs asleep in his father's flocks. Destinies come and go across David's face — and psalms.

One blow for a hundred wars?

He hears the old brooks in the hills. "Thy gentleness hath made me great." Standing over Saul to long for him, David saw God in himself, and when the waking came Saul knew at last that David must be king, because he had a king's heart.

The king in the gate, peering across the plain — Absalom fighting for the throne — the messengers running — a question — a complete theology. "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Once he lay with his head on his arm — this shepherd boy, — and he watched the wandering flocks trooping above his sheep. "He would be a king; he would have princes for his sons."

He had not thought of this.

Through the heart-aches of a thousand years the Father-cry — the father-cry, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee. O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The king's cry in the gate. The hailing of the Cross. The Fatherhood of God.

XIII

Who Giveth Songs in the Night

ONE would know that David must have lain awake with these songs of his. The beautiful broken sleep of a Hebrew king floats down its music, and for thousands of years we sing, because David shared the shadow of the sun with the shining ones, and in their wakefulness remembered not his rest.

O listening Night, when the children of mothers are born, and the children of the sky come forth, and the songs of the heart, and the Morning makes ready for Joy.

O watching Night, when souls are unlocked with the dark and Silence sojourns with men, when the wind goes forth a muffled footstep of the day, and Sleep — from down his eternal ways — Sleep has

come to us, and Dream — the walking of God through sleep!

O Eternal Night, O Infinite Face, bend low. The sun has wandered down the west. The tiny day has gone. Say thou again "Thou belongest unto Me! I am Death. I am Life. I am God. Thou belongest unto Me!"

O Infinite Face, with the shadow I know not of and the light I cannot know, with the shadow I know, I come, with the shadow of earth I come, with David's prayer I come. "Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, for I am poor and needy, yet Thou thinkest upon me. Make no tarrying, O my God."

No one would care what David did after reading these psalms. Hamlet saw the king praying. If he had heard him, he would have forgiven him. Shakspere knew the manner of men too well to let the penitent words be known. It would make a god a God to listen one day to the world, and a man could hardly overhear the human heart for a thousand years without a

divine love in him. It has been wondered that God could come down to the earth. He could not help coming. There was a cross because he had listened to David's prayers.

It is insolent to wonder that he loves us. Any one would be a god who knew what a god knows. The one attribute of God is omniscience, and his virtues are the necessities of His knowledge. Rising into penitence, forgiveness, and peace, with no cross to make him bold, even David could chant in the night watches, "He delivered me because he delighted in me," and "I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." The transfiguration of Moses which the disciples thought they saw had happened a thousand years before. It was the Singer in the night.

The psalms are the real revelation of the Decalogue. What Moses stated, David sang. Commands had become prayers. It was the limitation of Moses that he sang but twice, that his song was separated from everything else. "I will sing unto the

Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." The Ten Commandments were delivered to a silent people by a silent man. Miriam's song was not there. There were no responses. The voices of men sang not back to God at the foot of Sinai. Singing had been confined to the Red Sea, but the Red Sea song, broken loose in David, sweeps the worship of Israel in his "Praise ye the Lord" to the very foot of the Commandment mountain, and the laws of Moses are choruses at last, on the lips of the congregation. The inside of the Ten Commandments came with one who saw them from the inside. David was the discoverer of the law's heart. His way of conceiving duty was praise. His method of doing it was communion. He has not a song that does not pray, or a prayer that does not sing. This was a new thing in the world. It was a poet's inevitable interpretation of command, gained as a poet must ever gain his interpretation, through life itself. He sang his experience of The Will. It was "Thy gentleness has made me great."

Jesus was the Redeemer of the Old Testament. He saved it for us. David was the redeemer of Moses. The nobler sense of relatedness, which is the essence of the poetic temperament, gave to the world in him two mighty moods that never had been blended before. Saul loved to listen because it was king's music. The same fingers that found the gentle reveries of the immortal harp held up the head of Goliath before the shouts of soldiers.

Before the darkness of a dream — beautiful dips of the harp which seem to glide down and down and down into the old, old melody that deep below life God keeps for the nearer ones — the melody that seems to sing about music that it came from — not yet for us. Achilles is Homer.

Along the streets the women singing and dancing with tabrets, with joy and with instruments of music, Homer is his own Achilles.

An inspiration of paradox — a soul which is the most intimate revelation between the "I AM" and "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." With

"sons of Abraham," "sons of Isaac," "sons of Jacob," children of Israel, there is one name folded away with the pillar of cloud. There should never be the title "The son of Moses." Though with a David-place in his heart, it was not for his people to know. The name of God should be "The Son of David."

While it was somewhat to be Homer and Achilles, both at once, it was the greatness of the psalmist that he made men love him. He was the Old Testament atonement — this warrior minstrel — this king-poet, the singer of command, writing the Pentateuch over into hymns, saying his prayers with the Ten Commandments.

XIV

When the People Saw the Mountain Smoking They Stood Afar Off

THE second commandment was against idols, and the only alternative for the Hebrew was to make an idol of the thick darkness from which the commandment was issued. This is what he did. The smoke-god was the ghost of idol worship. The Voice was in the darkness, and it was carefully called the sign of God's presence, and not God himself. But when the average Hebrew looked up from his manna-gathering to the pillar in the sky, it was God. It was exactly God.

The cloud was the first clumsy and yet beautiful groping of the human heart toward infinity. It was a mystery idol, carved by the soft airs of heaven. There

were no poor trivial human outlines. It was the idol of the Breath of God, half of heaven and half of the earth, floating over the lives of men like a thought. Always to be glorious because it first caught God away from the stone-loving, material ways of the human heart, a cloud is yet but a cloud, a poor tiny wraith of infinity, tucked over a little mountain way, down under the worlds, on a little earth. The worlds shone on unrecognized.

The essential thing about the pillar of fire was its nearness. It protected the Hebrews from the lonely stars, from the infinity of their God. Children crying in the dark, Jehovah kept a dim light burning over them to show that he was there. They did not know that the night was God.

And yet the very fear of Jehovah had a certain familiarity in it, the sense of a right to constant attention, to striking miracles. There is an impression of a certain haughty intimacy, a divine neighborliness on the part of the One of Sinai that no amount of thunder and lightning and darkness and

terror can quite remove from the early Hebrew thought. An air of close and mutual watchfulness — at once the source of the moral energy and the philosophical childishness of the Hebrew — runs through all the earlier chapters of the Bible, as if Jehovah were experimenting with the human nature he had made, and men were experimenting with him.

There is a freshness of atmosphere as if nothing had ever been done before, as if the responsibility of sinning the first fresh sins in all the world came then, with the glow and zest not left to us, in these later days, when the iron monotony of evil has pressed down its awful commonplace upon the human heart, and we sin too wisely to sin well — too thoughtfully, with a haunting of an inherited sadness and all the inconvenient convictions that reflect the experience of men.

Living when all the sins of which we can think have been used over and over again — when original sin is called original because it is not — we look back in the earlier

Scriptures to a time when the originality of a sin was the most fascinating part of it.

The activity of Jehovah in the Pentateuch, the bustle of morality called forth by this creative period of immorality, is noticeably lessened when the sin of Israel has become a mere inheritance in the land of Canaan and the uniqueness of disobedience has lost its bloom. God and man are connected in every verse. Everything is either right or wrong. Every word moralizes. In Chronicles, and through the bad Kings, revelation grows aloof, and the emphasis of prophecy is changed to the story of events, as if Jehovah were letting men wander as they would — weary of history, waiting for something worth while, or a man to be born like David who would call out His waiting love and turn Him toward men again — for their beautiful dreams of what they would be if they could. There was a time of divine retreat when the soul of the fathers worshiping their less familiar God drew closer to Him in the silence. He had been jealous before

Restive — He had seemed to change His mind, to lose His patience — a new God only beginning to learn how discouraging people were. Through all these cruder days the conception which emphasized His nearness belittled it, and He seems to have taken the opportunity — Infinite God — Incognito — to disguise Himself for the little awe of men in the tawdry passions that they had themselves, before they knew who He was.

The metaphor of a profound philosophy to us, Genesis was not a metaphor to the Hebrew, and this barbaric literalness of God's being almost in the next room was the token both of inspiration and limitation. The Hebrew revelation was inspired enough to begin at the beginning of the mind as well as the beginning of the world; and although it has been a supposed duty to maintain a special private psychology for the Bible — to believe that it could not have been inspired unless it commenced in the middle, or commenced at both ends, or did not commence at all,— the idea of

truth looking down on itself as it winds high and higher through its pages, has gained momentum enough to make us distinctly worship God for what the children in the wilderness did not see.

They did not see infinity. The God of their duties was not the Infinite God. Though the Book of Job may have been a poem before the death of Moses, it was certainly not history until after David. Full of the trivial-terrible, Jehovah was a more earnest play-god in the groping childhood of the human spirit.

Before the telescope and the Sermon on the Mount, the compass and the thirteenth of Corinthians had wrought their vast and mutual prophecy; before Paul and Luther and Galileo and Columbus and—Jesus, had unfolded the works and the thoughts of God; under the serene satire of the heavens in the little land of Uz, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth,"—Job became the discoverer of infinity.

XV

"Where Wast Thou When I Laid the Foundations of the Earth?"

But Job was more than the discoverer of infinity. He was the first to see the bearing of infinity on righteousness. He was the Moses of the sky and the earth and the sea. He connected the Ten Commandments with the universe. He did for the first chapter of Genesis what David did for the twentieth chapter of Exodus. He set it to music. He made it an incentive to action.

The imagination of Job was the science of his day. He turned men to God through the natural world. It was the return of religion to nature, the renaissance of creation. His heart had the further listening in it. He heard the voice beyond the Sinai

voice — the Voice of the voice — when darkness was upon the face of the deep, and God out of the infinite shadow moved forth over the chaos of the earth, and the young thunders called across the new seas, and the "morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

The Jewish law had not seemed, for the most part, to go back of Mount Sinai. The voice of God was an inland voice; like the voice of man, it had a place where it belonged — the cloud and darkness over a mountain in the wilderness. It was trivial with geography. It was provincial, personal. "The Lord said unto Moses." To bring the Voice out of a desert in Arabia, to teach the world to listen to the silence of the sky and the whisper of the earth — this is the destiny of Job. He looked beyond the Burning Bush. The Day was a Face that watched the lives of men. The Night was a shadow for the sleep of the world.

The prelude to the Ten Commandments had been simply "I am the Lord thy God,

who brought thee out of the land of Egypt." Egypt was enough infinity for the earlier Hebrew theology. Mosaic law was based upon an experience. The great point of the Hebrew was the Lord's relation to *him*. He did not care what God had been doing before. Howsoever it may have been, the earth had been created. Religion was the sublimer way of getting as much as possible out of it. The Lord's relation to others was irrelevant. The Hebrews did not attempt to make converts of the Egyptians. They took their jewels. Their way of converting the inhabitants of Canaan had been to destroy them, and their indifference as to God's relation to other men took the kindred form of an indifference as to God's relation to the natural world. Creation was irrelevant. It had occurred, and had no practical bearing upon what God would do next. The natural world was not an expression of Him, but something that he had power over, and as long as they were supplied with manna, and the power was used in their behalf, they were satisfied.

Abraham was told that his children would be as the stars for multitude, which statement, instead of being a revelation of creation to Abraham, was a calculation. He argued that Jehovah would keep his promise because he had kept other promises. Job would have argued that the Lord would keep his promise because he was the Lord of the stars and promises together. Job was a poet. He established a new connection.

The early Hebrews do not seem to have been interested in the Lord — as a Lord. They were too shrewd with Jehovah to understand Him. They never forgot themselves. They approached Him for a purpose, and to the piety that is a mere deification of a contract, the Spirit is slow in revealing itself. Though dim suggestions and beautiful outlooks cannot be crowded out of practical things, in divine revelation, as in human art, the practical emphasis is not practical. The too eager hand belongs to closed eyes. We cannot know Dante by his account-book, nor Shakspere by

his bargains with the actors, and Xantippe never knew Socrates, because she could never see him without compelling him to do something for her.

The point of the Jewish character, which involves almost every failing, from the lie of Abraham to the rejection of Christ, is the characteristic Hebrew inability to see anything in an impersonal way, from God in the heavens to thirty pieces of silver in the hands of a priest. Jacob, wrestling with the angel of the Lord, is the type of Hebrew prayer — blind, splendid, indomitable desire. The blessing is the God. The blessing is what God is for. It is the sublimity of Job that his conception of duty was based not upon what God had done for him, but upon God considered as a God,—the wonder that he would do anything for him at all. The sublimest personal faith in the Old Testament was based upon impersonality itself. For the very reason that God mocked him in the whirlwind, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?" Job clung

to Him. It is the mightier faith that is conquered from despair. The peace of awe was upon him — the breath from the worlds. The skepticism of Omar Khayyam was the faith of Job. The worship of vastness in which the Persian felt it logical to lose his soul, was Job's way of finding his.

"Impotent pieces of the game he plays
Upon this checkerboard of Nights and Days;
Hither and thither moves and checks and slays,
And one by one in the closet lays.

"And that inverted bowl they call the sky,
Whereunder, crawling, cooped we live and die,
Lift not your hands to It for help — for it
As impotently rolls as you or I."

Another voice:

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days begun?
And caused the dayspring to know its place?—
Hast thou comprehended the breadth of the earth?
Declare if thou knowest it all.
Where is the way to the dwelling of light?
And as for darkness, where is the place thereof,

That thou shouldst take it to the bound thereof,
And that thou shouldst discern the paths to the
house thereof?
By what way is the light parted —
Or the east wind scattered upon the earth?
Canst thou send forth lightnings that they may go
And say unto thee, 'Here we are'?"

Singing under Omar Khayyam's sky:

"Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were printed in a book!
That they were graven with an iron pen and lead,
They were graven on the rock forever!
I KNOW THAT MY REDEEMER LIVETH
And that He shall stand at last upon the earth,
And tho' after my skin, worms destroy this body,
Yet in my flesh I shall see God,
Whom I shall see for myself —
And mine eyes shall behold and not another!"

— the angels of the Resurrection fifteen hundred years away.

And this is Job, finding glory in being forgotten. With the night-light his soul discovered God. Under the hush thereof

"Behold, I am vile.
I lay mine hand upon my mouth."

"I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear,
But now mine eye seeth Thee."

And Job, the inspirer of pain, the redeemer of sorrow, forging out of despair his mighty creed, marks the transition from the childhood to the manhood of faith.

The whole human spirit struggles in this far-off song. The centuries met one night in this grand old heart. Under the empty sky they cried themselves out — silenced — sky-silenced — as long as the spirit of Job keeps answering in the world. For the few short years we sojourn under the stars a song shall follow them. It is Job's sky — and God's.

The discoverer of a lost Creator, Job was the first pure, disinterested worshiper that God ever had. No longer a divine Convenience, a Promise-Divinity, the Creator was rediscovered — drawn out from the tiny nook of faith that the desires of men had made for him, into His Own House.

XVI

Curse God and Die

THE very essence of Job's faith was its breadth. Breadth was its practicalness. The faith of Eliphaz and Zophar and Bildad was too narrow to cover the case. Job cries, "Have pity on me, O my friends. The hand of God hath touched me." Zophar soothes him: "Such is the portion of the wicked man. Terrors come upon him and the heritage decreed from the Mighty One."

Job had lost his children. He had lost his flocks. He had lost all for whom he lived, and he had boils and—friends.

Comforting a poor man in sorrow by telling him that he deserved it, and that he will have more if he does not grant that he deserves it, may seem satirical to the modern mind, but it must be remembered

of the friends of Job that they not only began well, by sitting with him seven days and nights and not saying anything, but they offered the very best comfort, when they felt it dutiful to speak, that theology afforded at that time.

Trained to believe that righteousness was remunerative and that unrighteousness was not, a mere glance at Job showed how wicked he was, and seven days and nights of watching his suffering could only deepen the impression that came when they had first heard that he had lost his property — that he must have been a very doubtful character, in spite of appearances, from the first. This was their theology. It was the test of their orthodoxy that they were on the side of the lost she-asses and the boils. They very truly said that they could not do differently — they and the Lord. It was the Mosaic conception of duty and its reward. Job was a most unquestionable heretic. He did not have a shadow of precedent in his favor. Seven deaths, and a missing fortune, the Sabeans and their

swords, fire and wind, were their argument, and a wife, with her "Curse God and die."

The real grandeur of Job was his impatience. His humility before God is but the more beautiful side of his anger with his friends, and his self-abasement before his Maker is the crowning dignity of a self-respect which is one of the epics of the world. The only proof he had of his righteousness was himself. And he bowed before his Maker and believed in Him because he dared to believe in that self against hail and fire and death and the words of men and the fear of their prim little dogma-god. "My righteousness I hold fast and will not let it go"—the parable of every hero; wonderful now, but more wonderful then, when Job fought the mighty fight alone, and went before us all down through sorrow to the heart of God.

His maintaining his righteousness in the face of evil was the shadow of the Messiah. Christ did not argue about the cross. He died on it. The argument was in Job. Isaiah prophesied the glory of suffering—the suf-

fering of the righteous; Job proved it in his life, Christ with his death. The whole Hebrew faith had been put into a honeycomb of special providences, and with all this array of disaster the friends of Job either had to give up Job's righteousness or God's; either believe that every detail of good and evil that happened to them was a special providence, which was religion; or special improvidence, which was atheism.

It was because Job would do neither that he struck out a new path and won the freedom of God — the right to bring evil upon those he loved; one of the first instances in the world in which breadth was more practical than narrowness. Job was the discoverer of a practical faith which would stand the test of life, because he was the first to take God's point of view — to see that in the nature of the case it must be a universe; that a God whose point of view was not the universe would not be a God at all.

Infinity was gained with its perspective. It was something more than an ornament of Deity— a poetic invocation. It was God

himself living into a vast system in which every soul and sorrow and blessing had its place. The dovetailing of rewards into one little existence — the whole creation a body-servant for a worthy Jew — Job had the sublime humor of every greater poet, and the Little God who does little things for little men to gain a little faith for a little time, puttering with their egotism to win their souls, vanished. The egotism which is the religion of the little man when he succeeds, the infidelity of the little man when he fails, the "I," which is the essence of littleness, which is the blasphemy alike of creeds and curses and prayers and sneers, met its sublime, eternal, triumphant rebuke in Job.

Though living under a false astronomy, he had just that quality of selflessness in his worship which would have made him surmise that the universe was not made to revolve around the earth as a center, or especially arranged to furnish heat and starlight to the Land of Uz. Such a discovery on Job's part would have been but the astronomical form of his theology.

With the star measurements to measure himself and suggest his immeasurable God, Job did not expect the universe to be preoccupied with his estate, and performed his duty without requiring it.

He was too spiritual to have a Land of Uz God, or a Job's God, or a Jews' God. With their tiny, compacted, Land of Uz faith, his friends gathered around him, and accused him of blasphemy because God was so much more of a God to him than to them; because he gave Him room and gave Him time — the prerogatives of a God; because he saw that even a God was not divine enough to have a thousand centers, or hinge infinity on Uz.

With a breadth of conception that made the Creator nearer as well as farther, Job found in the vast itself the homelikeness the infinite alone can afford for our struggling human faith; the peace that passeth all understanding — peace just because it passeth all understanding. Eliphaz had to understand. He could have but the peace that comes a little at a time, as understanding

comes, and that moves away when understanding goes. The Infinite is the only rest the finite has. Job rested in it.

From the point of view of Eliphaz and Zophar, infinity in a God was unpractical. It was vague — the nebula of divinity. It had nothing definite to grasp. The men of Uz could not be governed by the aurora borealis. In the burning of a city, the recourse of Eliphaz was the Sodom hypothesis — an hypothesis which, like all narrowness, was very practical from one side, if, considering the sins of men, one ignored, on the other, that the least a logical God could do would be to burn the city over every year. The doctrine of Eliphaz by its irreverent definiteness was the greatest practical encouragement toward wickedness in his day. A motive for righteousness which required constant fires could hardly be practical in a world which could only be kept burning part of the time. Only a broader law applying before a fire as well as after, would be worthy of a jurist, or a God.

Thousands of miles of telegraph would

have been scientific proof with which to balance the striking of his flocks by lightning; but Job was a poet. He could take for granted. Mystery was a conviction in his theology, and humbleness, and giving God the benefit of a doubt, and when the great wind smote his sons, he did not need several thousand years of windmills and the sails that discovered the New World, to be sure that God's arrangements were best, or sure that wind had suddenly become a personal affront, had come from the ends of the earth across snows and seas to rebuke a man named Job. Job was practical because he was broad. He had a definite solution for the struggle of life because he was vague. Mystery was the conviction that made his theology at once the sublimest and most practical conception of the living One.

He was the first to give God time, the first to give Him room, the first to see His long looks, His glances of a thousand years. Out of the treasuries of the snow, the guiding of mornings and wandering of nights,

and all the vast and beautiful care of the infinite heart, Job learned the awe that was to make his faith one of the mighty memories of men.

Thus he was the emancipator of righteousness, the inspirer of pain. He shall be remembered as the redeemer of sorrow, one who could sing with a cross; one who lifted duty above reward and degraded sin below punishment, because he discovered the infinity of God, because he lost himself in the wideness of His ways.

XVII

Doth Not Wisdom Cry and Understanding Put Forth Her Voice?

SOLOMON could not keep the Proverbs. So he wrote them. The founder of moral philosophy — the duty which Moses stated and David attempted, Solomon explained. Morality passed into its motto stage.

But the prayer at the dedication of the temple must be read with the eleventh chapter of Kings.[1] And "Without me ye can do nothing."

A book with a less inspired conception than the Bible, of religion, and therefore of art, following the more common human instinct, would have suppressed this chapter in Kings. Solomon's literary executors,

[1] But King Solomon loved many strange women . . . and his wives turned away his heart.

seeing that it would jar upon the artistic unity of his work, would have arranged the writing of his biography with decorous deceit. It would have had all those unprophetic omissions that belong to the narrower idea of beauty and the smaller artists' cowardice of life. The readers of Proverbs for thousands of years would have innocently longed to be like Solomon. The world would have been set back in its spiritual achievement for an indefinite period, and all those reserves of knowledge which come of knowledge experiencing itself, would have been lost. Confidently working upon the impossible, full of the glad consciousness that the Proverbs were the solution of moral effort; in the blind, crude ways of life would the world have learned that there had been a lie somewhere — a moral romance — that had to be suffered and suffered away from the human heart — because the perfect finish of Solomon's art had been preserved.

To the sublime literary morality of the Bible we are indebted for the fact that the

most valuable contribution that Solomon made to us was not thus sacrificed — the comment of the eleventh chapter of Kings upon the three thousand Proverbs. Called the wisest man in the world because he repented in *bons mots*, because no one has had so gifted a repentance since, Solomon will be immortal in the minds of men, because of his consummate literary longing to have them do wrong more wisely. Eloquence is not having what we want, but wanting it. Wisdom is the art of demanding that others shall do better than ourselves. A proverb is saying what we wish we had done, or hoped that we would, and all the wise sayings that stretch their dainty rhetoric over our naked lives are the inventories of our ignorance — the retrospect of the beauty we have lost.

The great Redeemer Satire of the Old Testament, Solomon comes to us the climax of the bitter truth — the human heart waiting with words, bitterly with words — with words — outside of the gates of Bethlehem. Giving to the Hebrews a larger

assortment of thoroughly understood sins, and no inspiration to avoid them, except an ironical life — "I have not kept these Proverbs; how much less chance there is for you, who cannot even say them" — this was the mission of the wisest man in the world.

And yet that it was better for men to do wrong intelligently than ignorantly, this passing phase of mottoes shall stand as one of the records of God. The moral philosophy which had been simply God's convenience, came to an end in this questioning and observing of life. Solomon went back of the divine will to the nature of things. Bringing the Law out from the mere authority of One in whom a man might believe or might not, he surrounded it with the authority of this actual world, in which a man has to live, whatever he believes. It was the discovery of reasonableness, of what might be called the mind of God.

The natural rudimentary Mosaic attitude toward a fire — not that it blisters, but that

it has been said, "Thou shalt not touch it," — finds its supplement in Solomon; and the higher obedience, based upon knowledge, in the brilliant son of David comes to its first great emphasis. Philosophy was the study of blisters.

Discovering a larger man, as Job had discovered a larger God, he represents a humanist movement, the turning of man to himself — the self-discovery which wrought out as a habit of thought the identity of the moral law with the nature of man. A teacher of the experiences of morality, Solomon connected the mystical voice of Sinai with the conscience of every day, and the religion of what they knew about themselves as well as the religion of what they had been told about their God was given to the race.

But the higher value of Solomon's reign was not this. It is only by standing in the ruins of his temple that we can worship there, can read in the mighty, broken outlines the truth at last. Built with proverb and stone and gold, it is one of the great half-truths of history, completed alone by

being half destroyed. The Saracen in fierce unconsciousness was to become the interpreter of Solomon, bringing to its logical conclusion in the dust of the earth the gospel of the eleventh chapter of Kings.

At once the discoverer of moral philosophy as the theory of heaven and the way to hell, Solomon is the immortal illustration of the merely moral man — not that he was moral, or that the merely moral man is ever moral, but that he is impossible. The oft-recurring type of the broad and understanding man who enlarges the area of the truth without having life enough to cover it, finds its great original in one who substituted reasonableness for righteousness and forgot God in building a temple for Him.

The history of the human race is the Brobdingnag biography of every unknown soul. The passing phases of our lives are the old shadows of these mightier destinies that have crossed our world, to prove with a classic tragedy what we know with a passing thought.

Nations have been born and lived and died to furnish the moral philosophy of a child, of an afternoon. With a thousand years and a million sorrowing hearts tucked into his epigrams, Solomon himself shall be to us an unforgotten proverb — a great experience of the world. Writing a book which has the distinction of being the only book in the Bible that every one outgrows, his appeal is to the time of crudeness, when observation is still piety and the will not yet unmasked, still proud of its trim omnipotence. In the time of spiritual glibness and dogmatic confidence, in the zest of our ignorance, we conjure inspiration out of Proverbs and dream of life, but to life itself must always come the wondering humbleness of the New Testament. To live is yet to look back upon Solomon's sayings with sad wonder at ourselves. With their tiny courtly glory in the struggle of the years, they but linger by the name of Christ — dim, pathetic decorations on the sternness and the realness and the silence of the cross.

David was not a philosopher, and Solomon would have patronized the childishness of his father's faith, but the Son of God was called the son of David because Solomon was not; and the only value of the temple that the wise king built, was that his father's prayers would be prayed there, that long after the stately obviousness of the Proverbs had become an old ornament in the world, the songs of David's spirit should be upon the lips of the nations as far as sin and longing and hope and fear have reached their cries upon the earth — the wise earth — the wearily-wise earth — the hungering and thirsting earth — parched with proverbs — dying with epigrams — waiting for God.

XVIII

Vanity! Vanity! All is Vanity

ECCLESIASTES is the text-book of suicides. Though not without hope, the hope is a gilded discouragement, lighting the world to show how dark it is. Only in a book as supremely victorious as the Bible could such an appealing and beautiful prophecy of despair be safely printed. It is the shadow-song of the earth. It is the masterpiece of the Night. It is the culmination of the Proverbs and the lives of the kings. "As when a hungry man dreameth and behold he eateth, and he waketh and his soul is empty." Sadder than David's Psalms, because they had tears; sadder than death, because there was no death, it is the confessional of wisdom, and through its wonderful lines, hallowed with a broken heart, the

restless spirit of man shall move forever to find in its forbidding fellowship, its sublime self-pity, the *Miserere* of the world. Even when the poet comes to his climax and struggles toward joy — "Rejoice, O young man. Remove sorrow from thine heart,"— the *Gloria* strives for its voices in the song of youth only to modulate into death, death, death, "When the mourners go about the streets and the dust returns to the earth as it was and the spirit to God who gave it." "Vanity! Vanity! All is vanity!"— the litany of philosophy, closing at last with its saddest sentence, "All hath been heard," in the middle of the Bible.

The pitiful attempt at a New Testament, Ecclesiastes is the caricature of a Proverb straining to be a cross. The immortal argument of the merely moral man confuted by himself, it marks at once the beginning of moral philosophy as a contribution to mankind, and the end of moral philosophy as the solution of human life.

The author of Ecclesiastes, whoever he may have been, was a man like men: a uni-

versal man. The last testament of a man of affairs — a scholar, a seer, a diplomat, a lover,— it cannot be set aside as the discouraged wisdom of a monk or the pessimism of an aloof life.

> I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
> By the roes and the hinds of the fields,
> That ye stir not up nor waken love

— the wooing strain in the song of Solomon floats softly through all the lines of what must ever stand as the most experienced book in the Old Testament; the very force and completeness of which is altogether lost if it is not the symphony of a wonderful and various life. The love-song motif, "Awake, O North Wind, and blow thou South!" like the ghost of a brighter melody through the mighty minor chords that sing the weariness of the world, winds ever like a beauty that is lost, not by being overlooked, but by having been lived down through to bitterness. "One generation goeth and another generation cometh, and

the earth abideth forever," and the minor chords, and "That which hath been is that which shall be, and that which is to be hath already been, and God seeketh again that which hath passed away."

"All hath been heard." The voices are still and the world sleeps and dreams and waits. The hush of darkness is upon it. It is the starlight Revelation.

No man knoweth. The morning comes at midnight — only to God.

XIX

The Shadow Christ

I

It was a most startling hypothesis that came to the unknown Isaiah: "If God were to come to Judea and live, what kind of man would he be?"

To be original is to discover the commonplace of a thousand years — to face at first the sneer that no one would have thought of it, and at last the indifference because any one would. He who thinks a mighty thought weaves him an immortal shroud. Fame is the beginning of forgetting. To be great is to take one of the habits of the gods — to move everywhere unknown — to be accorded the world for a burial-ground — to be a spirit, a thought — to breathe through the unnamed winds. To be great is to be capable of becoming

as commonplace as the rustling of the leaves, and sunshine, and Christ. It shall need a prophet to tell who a prophet was —to distill his spirit out of the souls of men. He shall be a wraith, gathered out of life like the morning mists. Men shall strive to divine his face, shall paint and sing —shall seek to say, "This is he"; but out of the Dust and the Spirit he came. To the Spirit and the Dust he shall return.

Immortality has been the romance of little men thrumming their harps in a little age. Out of the ground itself has science brought its mighty measure. It shall be a silent word. With his tinsel little thousands of years, there is one who sings the loves of a woman in Troy. His name is called immortal. With the pantomime of history flocking through his heart, there is one who sings the coming of the love of God, and the generations ask, "What is his name? Where was his abiding-place? Who knew him first?" And the answer shall be to every man: "His name shall be upon thy forehead. The spirit in thine

eyes shall be to him for a name. Its secret shall be life."

A prophet shall be the world itself. His breath shall blow from the seas. His immortality shall be nameless — like the immortalities of God — through the passing of flowers and suns. He shall be a conviction. He shall be a habit among the sons of men. About his spirit we shall build the faint and curious scaffoldings of history — that we may strive to rebuild his life. We shall gather from afar the tokens of his time — the pathetic little heaps — the dust of research. We shall blow it wisely in each other's eyes; but we shall not know — that greatest knowledge of all — that knowledge of how knowledge came — that knowledge of how it was before the knowledge came; or guess but dimly that mighty day when the Incarnation Truth was fresh in the heart of a man — fresh as the face of the earth when God gazed down that Creation morning, when He unfolded it out of darkness and loved it first.

We shall never know how dark it was nor

how light the light was, when, like a vast conjecture — amorphous, terrible, beautiful, tender, infinite, in the spirit of one who dreamed, there loomed the great Redeemer-Dream and sounded the chorus of all the earth — when to the first disciple of Jesus, hundreds of years away, there came as generations coming with oratorios on their lips:

Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? Hath it not been told thee from the beginning?

It is the everlasting God — the Lord — the Creator of the ends of the earth —

then the sudden silence — the Isaiah silence — and the sweetest, strangest solo in all the world singing like a little child's heart:

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs in His arms and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

The time of the blending of a human song with the music of the spheres, when

Isaiah caught the longing of God from the stars — when he knew the divinity of His coming down — bitterly and completely down — to the love of Mary and the cry on the Cross.

The more beautiful Bethlehem was in Isaiah's heart. Like the Wise Men of the East, Moses and Job and David had brought their offerings there, and in the synthesis of the three great conceptions of God — in the wonder of their being together — the book that is called Isaiah is the struggle of the world's dream — the Saviour sleep — the unwaked New Testament.

XX

The Shadow Christ

II

A GREAT man is one who makes the world greater to find room for himself. A thousand years to him and God are but as yesterday when it is passed. He has the mimic omnipresence of a soul wont to walk under the eaves of heaven with the Maker of the earth. The mighty one of every era is thousands of years away from those who dwell with him, and all the great men of the scattered years are nearer to each other than to the dates that gossip on their tombstones —the little difference that it makes when they are born, or the figures that tell us when they could not die.

The hero's solitude is his fellowship with heroes. From the years to the east and the years to the west they come. The paths

are short between the centuries, when, seeking their mighty kindred, the great go forth to visit in a prophet's heart; and from the beginning of the world transfiguration is the habit, the secret of every colossal life. "Live, O my mighty brother," the Secret says, "live in the littleness about thee, doomed to the dullness, gentle with the pain. When the empty roar is stilled and over the dear blind makers of the Noise shall reach the great soft hand of Sleep—there shall be the sound of coming—the gathering of thy brothers from afar; in the peace above the world shalt thou walk with them. In the trysting-place of prophets thou shalt touch their hands. From their eyes thy soul shall drink. As the night gathers the dew, their thought shall descend upon thee—glistening, refreshing, full of morning love; it shall be to thee for solemn delight—the faith for thy sacrifice. It shall be the word thou shalt speak when the Dawn and thou go down between the hills. Thou shalt not look back nor falter. Thy brotherhood with

prophets shall be to live without them. It shall be to believe in the greatness of little men—calling to it—pleading with it. Whether it come to thy face or to thy cross or to thy grave, their greatness shall be for thy greatness—created out of thy heart, humbled with thy sorrow, builded into the world."

The "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people" was the Unknown Isaiah's way of coming down from transfiguration.

Going to and fro, looking into every face for a hero, demanding, expecting, challenging, believing, Isaiah prophesied the Christ. Across the souls of his brothers he saw Him coming. Out of the east, out of the west, out of the north and the south, out of sorrow and exile and desire and despair—the gathering of God—to be born in Bethlehem. The Wise Men saw the star in the East and came across the deserts to the birth. Isaiah saw it in the spirit of men. He was in Gethsemane. The cry of the mob and the cry on the cross were convictions in the struggle of his life. His

prophecy was the irrevocable insight of love. The Night gathered as he gazed upon men. Tenderly and softly over his glowing thoughts, the Christ-spirit came—the hush, the Shadow, the Cross. It was no fragmentary, unconnected, beautiful reverie of sadness, coming like a voice on the air to be noted down with a pen. It was not a reported prophecy. It was life itself. It was his coming down from a transfiguration, it was the more actual, intimate prophecy—written on the street. Looking into his brothers' eyes he wrote it. He saw that the denials of Peter were there, that the stripes of Pilate could not be helped, and that Philip's cruel question was eternal upon the lips of men. He knew. He utterly knew—that on an earth where even a man could not be great without a sorrow, a God without a cross would not even be a man.

It was no great outside angel's voice leaning over his trembling body and telling him to write. It was no journalistic divining of events, no inspired information

of circumstance. It was a profound experience with the nature and law of life — a colossal judgment of the human race.

Gazing into its grandeur and its cowardice, he saw the inevitable conflict there. Out of the human heart itself deciphered the Creator's Secret for this earth — the passion of history — the Gethsemane — the Truth.

XXI

The Shadow Christ

III

ISAIAH'S transfiguration — his talking with Jesus across the generations — his outreaching through the future for a Man, was but the half of his prophecy. There have been candidates for prophets and candidates for saviours. There have been great-men-elect — natures that have conquered the forty days' fast and the temptation with Satan — who could not put their transfigurations behind them — and failed. Poets may live in transfigurations. Prophets will not. They may go there to rest — as Christ with Moses and Elias — to be soothed a little, to feel the coolness and the peace of God's hand, that it may touch for a moment the fever on their brows. Then to work.

The mingling of a transfiguration and a

fact makes a prophet possible. The looking for a Man *now* makes him inevitable. Poetry may be truth. Prophecy is where truth connects with the next thing to do. It is the sad end of the truth, but it is the end where heroes are, where ideals are idealized into facts, where great men, struggling for their faith, reach up their holy hands as though they would fasten the skies to the earth, as though with their very crosses they would hold them low for the prayers of men. The forgetful transfiguration may be more beautiful than the applied one — the foreign beauty, the unrighteous beauty of peace when there is no peace; but Isaiah prophesied the incarnation because incarnation was the habit of his life. He speaks the truth for all times because he was trying to find a truth big enough for his own — and build it there. This is the essential fact about the essential prophecy of history. It was incarnation that conceived Incarnation.

The bare idea of having a Messiah turns upon the Isaiah experience without one —

the fierce intentness of a practical struggler with a nation, forced into prophecy by the problem of life — the problem that comes to all of us, as, out of the sad and scattered years, comrades of the sun and comrades of the grave, we walk between them, this one great question ringing in our ears through the irrevocable days: "Shall we be impossible gods, poor wistful gods, half-created gods, on this earth of men; or shall we not?" — the challenge of the incarnation. To accept it is to live with the divine, the infinite, the unattainable, striking its splendid sorrow through all our deeds — beautiful, incomplete, glorious, defeated, dying. To refuse it is to mumble a love of what we dare not be, and call it worship. It is to whimper for a better world and call it religion. It is to be abdicated gods, because divinity has no chance withal, because there are no conveniences for heroes on the earth.

When our hearts are in tumult, and we are cast down, the incarnation challenge comes. When the day is over, when our

brother has returned us hate for love, dullness for insight, when he has cursed the dearest we could give, we shall go forth to the calm and absent-looking sky. We shall say: "It were simple to be a God — safe beyond the stars." From the vast resting-places in the deep the winds shall come to us. They shall blow upon the fever in our faces and we shall say: "It were simple enough to be a God — off where the winds begin; to be a God alone, to be a monk-God, with a universe for a hermitage, with worlds for infinite retreat; but to be a god *here*, to have a god's desires and a man's chance — to be mockingly eternal and cabined in days and nights,— to be infinite and dream stars, and be riveted down to the ground,— to have wings of love and be fastened to hate and wedded to blindness and mingled with beasts and harried hither and thither in the great unseemly shambles, where men think they live and do not even learn to die, and where they curse, and cast their souls into the filth, and trample their brothers under

their feet for the filth itself, and burn their heroes at the stake! Safe in infinity, with all Space in which to be Himself, shall a God who has made the worlds as He wished them to be require a man to be a god in a world which he did not make, a world which he did not choose, a world where to undertake to be a *man* is more than a god would care to do?" Thus the incarnation challenge comes.

It were indeed a god's world, framed for heaven, with its vast delights, bounded by skies and singing its own music day unto day. With one's own soul listening in it, it were easy to be a god alone—to let the links of light and the links of darkness, of song and starlight and sleep, fall across the years and bind us to its joy forever. It were easy to be a god thus—or to be a god with gods,—to troop through the vales of the earth and look into each other's souls; but to be a god with *men?*

The problem of every soul when the sons of God go forth to live.

Therefore God's problem—the struggle

with environment. The Messianic answer was the conviction of history, the gathered voice of the human race, exalted into the utterance of one who prophesied the Messiah because to him a God who would ask of His creatures more than He would do Himself would not be a God at all.

Thus came to pass the tremulous gospel —the writing of John across the soul of Isaiah.

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among men."

XXII

The Shadow Christ

IV

THE righteousness of God had been conceived before. Moses had bound it about the soul. His fatherhood had been conceived. David had sung it into one of the habits of Hebrew life. Job had made it an infinite fatherhood. Ethics had been thought out as a science. Men had conceived of a man in God's place for thousands of years. The man had been their God. Isaiah was a poet and conceived of a God in a man's place. The turning of this thought was the crisis of the world. Henceforth worship, which had been an effort—a scattering, an outgoing of the human heart into the Vast, a spreading of our little prayers across the sky—should be an incoming, a shining down. The in-

carnation was the concentration of God — the decree that the infinite should be the neighborhood of life.

But the greater idea, in its divine necessity, its logicalness, was not Isaiah's idea of having a Messiah. It was his idea of what He would be when He came: the incredible conception that when the Maker of the earth descended, He would be despised and rejected of men — the sublimest accusation of history, the supreme satire upon the human race, the most beautiful and awful reach of insight the world has known.

It was the intense humanness of this divinest prophet which alone could have anticipated the divinity, not of God's being a God, but the greater divinity of His being a man; His giving up a God's opportunities, His being a struggling God, with the little human outfit of Space and Time and Circumstance with which He asked Isaiah to be a prophet for Him and Peter to die for Him. There came to the vision of the seer, the Cross — the Consistent Creator —

showing to the human heart what He really was. Approaching his conception out of the atmosphere of the God of Israel instead of the memory of the Saviour Himself, Isaiah's anticipation bears within it a sense of the divine sacrifice so profound, so masterful, so full of praise and onwardness, of vast, exultant sorrow, that it sweeps its glorious tides into the New Testament itself, where the soul of Isaiah overflows and breaks its prophecies upon the words of Paul and fills the very presence of Christ with the fullness of the past.

It is too much to expect that a man great enough to prophesy a Messiah should have been at hand to interpret him when He came, but one cannot but wonder how much more the gospel of Luke would have revealed of the soul of Christ if it had been written by one who understood Jesus without seeing Him, instead of one who did not understand Him when he did; and while the cruelty of the love that was offered Christ was the supreme necessity of an honest incarnation, one cannot but wonder

whether "the things I have yet to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now," would not have been spoken, if there had been one great heroic soul endowed with habits and insights that would comprehend — to stand between this farewell talk, this pitiful reserve of Jesus and the human heart.

But the sound of the truth shall not be lost. It matters not. With the tide and the sun God brings it back. If the great listener be not at hand, his soul shall gather the murmur out of the ages as the shell gathers the sea. Luther takes the keys out of Peter's hands and Isaiah hears the Beatitudes in his grave,— one before whose father-messiah spirit the blundering peasants who walked with Jesus shall be as children forever, before whose majestic vision the inspired insight of the great apostle to the Gentiles becomes but the beautiful makeshift of the day, in the crisis of the kingdom on the earth.

Does no one feel the dim stirring, the sense of what it would have been, if but one of Paul's epistles could have been as-

signed to Isaiah — if he who wrote the mighty fore-word had left but one gentle retrospect — if he who spoke the sublimely unfulfilled had sung the fulfillment itself? We may go, it is true, through all history with our wistful "might have beens." All is answered and answered once for all, by the divine *was*. We may dare to reconstruct the past, because it is safe from our petty hands; but to ask what Paul would have written had he been in Isaiah's place? Conjecture is the huge shadow-measurement of men. Against its flickering outlines we may lift a soul and trace its greatness on the lives of heroes and the thoughts of God. Would Paul have prophesied the Christ — barely convinced by the Christ Himself? Would he have written anything at all, in that hopelessness which was Isaiah's opportunity? Paul was one who held garments while Isaiahs were being stoned. He belonged to the second order of great men — those who see afterward. The supreme great man of the divine visit to the earth, wrapped in his thousand years, side

by side with Peter, who knew him yesterday, Isaiah walks. Through his radiant New Testament soul, past the metaphysics of Paul and the letters of John the hearts of men gaze deep to know what their Messiah was.

From the point of view of a God descending to live with men — Isaiah's point of view — the emphasis that has been placed upon the cross, the more glaring, obvious cross, must have been the hardest part of dying on it. The picturesqueness — the vulgar appeal of the subtlest, divinest, silentest, most ceaseless sorrow on the earth — the cross was the narrowing down of the incarnation, not to its consummate point, but to its final inexpressibleness. It was the final attempt to crowd the infinite love which had been manifested more in the patience and divineness of every day, into the tiny, awful word that men call *Death* — the shallow side of suffering.

Standing in the awful light of that moment when Jesus died for them — so much more awful to them than to Him — so much

more awful than it was to them when they died themselves — the simple and terrified hearts of the Apostles wrote their memories of the Christ. They could not but be morbid with the cross. It was the key-moment through which they came to all the other moments, and through its immeasurable rebuke they wrote the life and interpreted the days that had passed. But Isaiah's insight did not come through the blinding misery of his own cowardice and the forsaken death of God. He saw Him through the stern exigencies of his own prophetic life — the greater, more sympathetic, more kindred way of seeing Him — the way that men who see before instead of afterward must always see. He saw what He had given up. He saw Him coming from infinite opportunity to crowd a god into a man as *he* was trying to crowd a prophet into a man. He knew the dread necessities He had taken upon his soul as one to whom the real cross would be not dying before — would be coming here at all — an insight which makes the fortieth and fifty-

third of Isaiah the supreme interpretation of the New Testament, though a solitary soul was singing it hundreds of years away.

To play at being men like the gods of the Greeks, to play at being gods like the poets and the dreamers of the earth, were not difficult; but to be in grim earnest, with uttermost faithfulness, a half-god, with a god's ideals and a man's body in a man's world; to be a half-man with a god's desires—Incarnation is the eternal essence of sorrow—the great creative sorrow which has been the dignity and the destiny of the strong from the beginning of the world. From the Incarnation downward, which was the story of Christ, to the Incarnation upward, which is the history of the human race, Savonarola and God by the birth in Bethlehem are brought into the same great tragedy—the manhood of the one, "I will be God"; the divinity of the other, "I will be a man." The great man's conception of a great Messiah, a conception which, approaching the divine life from the God's point of view, makes the manger in the inn

a mightier fact than the Cross, and Christmas the anniversary of the greatest sorrow in the world.

By a natural process in the endeavor to reach the feelings of the coarsest men, we have come to emphasize the very release of Jesus as His crowning sacrifice, because it took a form which the very brutes of the field would have dimly understood, and had the impressiveness of the fundamental awe of human life on which to move. The result is an exaggerated, lurid cross, looming high in the consciousness of men, because it is nearest to them, because death is the nearest word to terror, the shibboleth of cowards, of those who have lived not yet where life is deep enough to feel the gentleness of a grave, or know the way it greets a hero, or folds its rest about the incarnation-ones who suffer out the destinies of men.

The prayer in the later days, "Thy will and not mine be done," shall not be narrowed down to the fear of suffering. It shall be widened out into the hope of suf-

fering longer, the insistence of the incarnation, the spirit of One who in His conflict would have died on three crosses for three more years—of love and tireless trust and infinite expectancy—One who knew that He must die to prove to the world who He was, but who could not believe—not yet, not quite yet—"Oh, my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me!"—that He must die to prove to Peter and James and Philip who He was. To prove ourselves to those who hate, by dying—that might be—but to prove ourselves to those who love, to have them side by side wayfaring with us—dear outsiders in our hearts—to unfold our very souls to them—and ask, "Hast thou been so long time with me and dost thou not know me?"—to draw their faces in vain to our faces—to know that they will come at last, that they will look down into the eternal silence there—that they will love too late. This is Gethsemane love. To pass on with an incarnation that has failed—to serve our brothers by being remem-

bered instead of joining our hands with their hands and giving them our very selves—to give up the privilege of dying every day and die once—this was the cross of One who hoped to the last to found His kingdom upon the recognition of men instead of their infinite penitence. The hero, be he man or God, chooses the living death. He will live in sorrows that make the grave beautiful—a paradise of dust. He will live to sorrow out service for men who make the grave terrible only because it has no more to give, because there shall be no reaching out there, and no cry shall be heard there, and we are drawn into the dumbness of the earth.

The conception which for hundreds of years in the Church—in the counting off of souls and the worship of results—has made the fear of death the courage for conversion, finds but a refinement of itself in the emphasis of the cross—an emphasis which, while it is perfectly just and true and Messianic without the remotest question, is open to the objection that it is not

Messianic enough, that it is based on an essential under-estimate of One who was crucified first with the love that was borne Him, then with the hate—who died between two thieves—forever the symbols of His being on the earth, of the strange, sweet, triumphant fellowship He took upon Himself—a fellowship which above and beyond the cross, every day and every hour of misunderstanding, was itself the faithfulness, the realness, the bitter literalness of the incarnation—the being a God—a Comrade-God, among the sons of men.

XXIII

The Shadow Christ

V

THE talking of Jesus with Moses and Elias is the secret way back to Isaiah's prophecy for the modern heart — the parable of Isaiah's life.

Born with the instincts of greatness, one of the kindred of heroic vision, Elias was not as far from Jesus as the way Peter and James and John looked, when they were told what the Kingdom really was. They stand as the sorrowful symbol of contemporary faith in every age, toward every prophet. Wistful, wondering, struggling, ordinary men, day after day, in attracted dullness, they had hung upon His words. In the only way in which men who were arguing who should be greatest could call Him out, they called Him out; but there

came a time when there was nothing for them to do but to stand apart — to watch their Master talking with the great.

To Peter and James and John the transfiguration was the way Jesus had never looked for them — the shining in His face when great hearts loved Him back — the moment of His being understood.

To Jesus it was the moment of the mighty listeners, the moment when the men He might have had and the men He had to have faced each other — when the heartache of the difference shot its pain through the shining in His face.

In the soul of the Saviour they stood, these two groups of love. Between them a Cross. A transfiguration with Peter and James and John shut out, an absent-minded transfiguration, could not have come to Him. He was too great for that. He could face His fact and His faith in the one same calm, beautiful mood. It was the very essence of His greatness to think of the fishermen then. The one moment of utter brotherhood in His pitilessly solitary life, with the

neighbors of His spirit by His side — He was a Saviour because it was but a moment. He gave the password of the great, and then walked down the mountain to love ordinary James and try again with Judas and be Peter's brother until He died. The more beautiful transfiguration was the one on the way down, when, listening to the prattle of His apostles, transfiguration became incarnation. "Here in this little Galilee, *here, now*, with this self-same Peter, with this poor, pitiful James — HERE, NOW, I WILL BE THE SON OF GOD!"

Out of the struggle between his transfiguration love and his love of men, Isaiah prophesied an incarnation like this — mighty, daily, irrevocable, immeasurable — the unceasing crucifixion of the Christ. The incarnation was the expectancy of God — His trusting the human heart even beyond a cross,— even unto living with it. It was only an expectant Isaiah, expectant enough to incarnate, who could have prophesied an expectant Messiah, expectant enough to be a comrade with Judas and

Pilate and Mary Magdalene. Incarnation is the literalness of expectancy — the very experiencing of it. The "shall" which is but the room the prophet invokes from the greatness of God, out of centuries and nations, to fulfil himself, was but Isaiah's indomitable NOW, thrown into the long lenses, magnified by the spirit, stretched upon the years. The slide of one intense experience casts the outlines and colors of his soul upon the largest canvas of God. He is the portrait of an age — a prophet. Peter might have read the history of eighteen hundred years in the Saviour's eyes, had he been a prophet, and Isaiah's face was the shadowing of Christ's.

In the human stress, the agony of solitude, the vow of his own creative love, Isaiah lifted his heart to the ideal. "Not by being great thyself — not by needing great men around thee — but by making great men out of those thou hast, shalt thou be mine," saith the Lord. "In mine own godlike handiwork shalt thou come to me. Men thou shalt bring, wouldst thou be a man."

This was the Isaiah spirit. Striving to connect his transfiguration, struggling to say NOW, he discovered the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Wrought out of stolid human heart by the slowly coming Christ, Isaiah was the first great miracle of His spirit. He prophesied the Messiah He had tried to be. Lifted into the shadow of the mighty love, he was the Almost Christ, the Christ of the Night.

"Not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar."

"Having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth, that they were seeking a country of their own."

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